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THE

ANGLO-IRISH

OF

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

VOL. III.

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ANGLO-IRISH

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A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
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THE ANGLO-IRISH.

CHAPTER I.

"AND do you think I wonder, after this, that mere Irish people hate half-Irish people?" said Mr. Gunning, pursuing a conversation with Gerald, on the way home; "or that they, or at least the poor devils of peasants amongst them, should get together on the hill sides, or in the bogs, to which Sir John Lumley and his set kick them, or horsewhip them, and there plan some atrocious piece of vengeance?"

"Oh," said Gerald, "but we must not conclude that the horsewhipping system is any longer in operation; indeed, Sir John said it is not."

"Ay, but its spirit is, as well as the recollection of itself. Every word we heard this

evening, about the population of the country, was full of that spirit; and I must and will conclude, that so is every act of these nondescript colonists towards the objects of their impolitic dislike and impudent contempt—ay, impudent: and, confound their impudence, say I; no matter about their folly; *that* has cost them dear, and (may God forgive me for hoping that it may) cost them dearer. Favour me by supposing England—(its real population, like that of Ireland, undiminished)—colonized by a handful of men like these; how long would the fools be allowed to play their antics within the limits of our chalky cliffs?"

"But again, Mr. Gunning, we are not to suppose all the English-Irish in Ireland like to-day's specimen."

"True; though I see no reason why they should not be; at least, if 'the Caustle' gives the cue here, as St. James's does in town. I 'll wait, however; but, in the mean time, hinder me, if you can, from abusing that 'to-day's specimen." I never knew till now why it was that, whenever such of your half-Irish as I have seen, came to visit us in England, they appeared to be over-polite, over-conciliating, self-

doubting, inferior kind of men. But now I know it. They are tyrants at home under us, and they must be inferiors *from* home, in our presence: they can't help it."

"Say, more charitably, Sir, that, as they imitate England, they must naturally be second to Englishmen. Reynolds long ago made an axiom of my proposition, when he said, 'He who follows must ever remain behind.'"

"Burke, if you please, not Reynolds; I know the opinion is against me; as also is old Northcote, Sir Joshua's domesticated apprentice: no matter for all that; I'll have my own opinion; but this is not to the point; only I believe I am vexed enough to quarrel with doubtful claims of every kind; what a name you've all got! English-Irish, or Anglo-Irish; why you make yourselves out nothing at all; one 'does not know where to have you:' I wonder you never thought of having heard said, 'between two stools,' and so forth."

"You know, Mr. Gunning, I——"

"Well, no matter, good-night;" they had gained the steps before Morrysson's; "I sleep here; so, touch my cane,—good-night; but, do you know, I long to find out what the real Irish

people are like; have you started any of them yet?"

"One or two," answered Gerald.

"And what did you think of them?"

"I fear to shock your new predilection by telling."

"Well, don't then; for now that I recollect, I shouldn't care much for your opinion; that is—don't be angry—that is, I 'd rather wait and form my own. And so I will. Ay, by green Ireland's patron saint, will I,—very shortly too. Yes; and in the thick of them, down in the South. I 've taken my place in the stage, and start to-morrow morning. Good-night the third time, and get home as fast as you can."

"But you surely will allow me to go in to this hotel with you, for I, too, sleep here?"

"Do you? So we must have stumbled on each other, at all events; come along then;" as a waiter opened an inner door.

"And you have absolutely voyaged from England, Mr. Gunning, to penetrate, in a stage-coach, down into the wilds of Ireland, just to try what the genuine sons of Milesius are likely to be like?" asked Gerald, as they rested, together, in a public room.

"Who told you that? Not I, I 'm sure. I 've business here. Don't you know that my elder brother married an Irishwoman, or rather an English-Irish one?"

"Yes; a daughter of Lord Dargle."

"Very well; she has lately died, good lady; and of all things in the world, knowing that I was a poor dog enough,—(and, I suspect, at Dick's instance, though the fellow will never own it)—left me the portion of her property which was settled on herself: and as it is in the shape of Irish acres, joining the estate Dick also got by his excellent wife, why I am rather bound, I take it, to come and have a look;—to say nothing of a necessity for condolence, and all that, now that poor Dick is so much alone: he has no children, you know; else, I fancy, this bit of luck had never fallen to me."

At length the friends parted, and Gerald was free to collect his thoughts in his own chamber. The occurrences at Mr. Gore's, connected with the terrors of the night, the conversation, the characters, and even his discourse on the way home with Mr. Gunning, began materially to confuse, if not to change some of his former theories regarding his paternal country. But

upon that subject Gerald would now scarce interest himself. Maria Gore, her familiarity at one time, her slights at another; *his* puzzle about *her*, and *her* proposed puzzle about him; her strange questions, in allusion to the Knightlies; every body's questions in allusion to them; and, after hers, Flood's in particular; and the stare of surprise, really unaffected, as Gerald now believed, with which that gentleman had honoured him, previous to his last exit to seek Miss Maria in the back drawing-room; all this occupied Gerald's heart and imagination, to the exclusion of every other question.

After a good deal of consideration, if the work of his mind, upon this night, may be so termed, he rested in something like the following conclusions. His indifference to the Knightlies had become known to Maria Gore, and, at the instigation of Miss Rhoda, and perhaps, slightly, of his demure sister, that young lady determined to vex him on the point. Being so intimate with Flood, she had enlisted him in the absurd plot; and it was precisely within the range of his old schoolfellow's talent to relish the jest, and prove a zealous agent in promoting it. But Gerald was not disposed to

spend his time in Dublin as the scape-goat even of the beautiful Maria, or of his oldest friend. He would take care how he ever again gave Miss Maria an opportunity to amuse herself, or her "dear Augusta" either, at his expense. As to Captain Flood, early the next morning he could be asked to explain the whole part he had taken in the farce; his stare, his humoursome message into the back drawing-room, which had made the young beauty laugh so gleeishly; and her final answer to Gerald's question, as to whether or not he had ever seen her before they met in Dublin. And here it will be perceived that Gerald's lurking curiosity, and his fascination, if not love, for Maria Gore, had some share in directing the suggestions of his sulkiness: and, in fact, after laying his whole train of operations for the next day,—embarkation for England forming the final one,—he caught himself breathing a very warm and emphatic sigh in the service of the lovely and charming Maria—if, indeed, she *was* his French vision; for, strange to say, he almost unconsciously made that proviso.

Before daybreak he was awakened by the slow stumping of feet, and the firm tap of a stick

along the corridor, that ran by his chamber; presently the feet and the stick stopped at his door; then he was startled by three abrupt knocks, as if given with the stick, and Gunning's voice sounded abroad—"Are you awake?"

"Yes, thank *you*."

"Well, good-bye, then, I'm off: the stage starts in a few moments, from the office in the next street; good-bye:" and Gerald, grumbling much, was left to try for another sleep, if he could get it.

But he could not. His brain filled again with all its vivid thoughts of the previous night, and he lay awake till it was time to get up, and then, allowing an hour for breakfast, to set out to seek Captain Flood.

He had scarce arisen, when an attendant asked admittance to deliver the following note:—

"MY GOOD FELLOW,

"The absorbing pleasure of encountering you upon Carlisle-bridge, the charms of your discourse since, and the serious pressure of public, indeed national events, contemporaneous with our meeting, very nearly altogether put

it out of my head, I may venture to say, to hint or indicate to you, that for the last five days your warmest admirer has rested under a suggestion, or warning, from people who assert predominance over him, to march, with his troop, to-morrow morning, at six o'clock, unto the remote and somewhat southern town of ——, and there to take up his quarters, until farther orders. Now, amiable Blount, as, after my return from the interesting mansion of Mr. Gore, the hour seems too late to make you happy by a personal intimation of my sudden departure from Dublin, endeavour slightly to comprehend how matters stand, and waft me an imaginative adieu. Positively, I am rather led to expect that, in a very few days, Captain Rock and your poor friend are to become known to each other; therefore, wish me well, and abound with affectionate ejaculations for the fame and fortunes of,

"Your exceeding worshipper,

"CHARLES FLOOD."

"P. S. Permit a light hint to the effect that your sudden retreat, this evening, out of the

front drawing-room amazed, grieved, caused to be astounded, him who would have died to keep you that moment at his side.

"C. F."

This absurd note fretted Gerald much; the explanation with its writer, upon which he had so surely reckoned, was no longer within his reach. Would he follow Flood to the town of ——? He felt strongly tempted to do so. But no; he grew so tired of Ireland and of Irish people, that he would content himself with writing a letter to his old schoolfellow, merely requesting the information he seemed to have a right to demand; then hasten to London; communicate Augusta's position to her elder brother; determine upon a reply to her strange epistle from Lower-Court, (to be jointly written by Lord Clangore and himself,) and in the mean time Flood's answer would duly arrive by post.

Accordingly, Gerald sat down, and after some caution and effort got through two pages of a letter to Captain Flood, the first penmanship he had performed since his arm was broken. The waiter took charge of it for the post; and, under his directions, Gerald then went

out to engage, at the proper office, a berth in a packet for England. His late peevishness was not soothed by learning that the Holyhead packet had sailed many hours before: after farther inquiries, he heard that he might probably be in time for the Liverpool packet at Dunleary. He hastened back to his hotel; settled his not unreasonable bill; took a hackney-coach; bribed the wilfully-cool driver to trot his lean horses as fast as they could or would be exhorted to go; and arrived at the point required quite in time to have the diligent vessel pointed out to him, a white speck on the verge of the horizon. "Time and tide, you know, Sir," smiled the boatman, intimating the old adage;—"I know, thank you," said Gerald, and was driven back to Dublin.

Now he had another evening to consume in the metropolis of Ireland, alone and unassisted; for his bile rose against a thought of Stephen's-green, or of any one in it, not even excepting the most beautiful of "the three most beautiful creatures in Dublin." At the first view of this prospect, Gerald resolved to go to sleep, the moment he should get reinstalled in his bed-chamber at Morrysson's.

Gaining the streets of the town, placards of the theatrical bill of fare for the evening caught his eye, and he changed his mind ; so far, at least, as regarded the place for going to sleep ; for Gerald had little doubt of being able to enjoy a comfortable nap in the back of a box in the Dublin Theatre Royal, just as easily as in his back bedroom at his hotel.

Eager to avail himself of the proposed means for spending his evening, Gerald resolved to be in the theatre at an early hour. Mr. Morrysson's cook, however, and his bottle of claret, sufficiently interested him until after the time at which, according to announcement, the doors were to be opened; and even then, only for consistency's sake, he would not have left his warm fire-side and cheering glass, to encounter the chances of a half-filled, cold theatre.

He soon found himself, however, before the then imperfected front and piazzas of the new theatre, in Hawkin's-street, late the fine pile of the Dublin Society, which that economical body sold for almost nothing to a London manager, while they purchased, for forty thousand pounds, from the rich Duke of Leinster, his Grace's patrimonial and only town mansion—

a building not so well suited to the manifold purposes of their institution: and thus, it might be said, public patriotism squandered public funds, in the one instance, without gaining any thing by the profusion; and private patriotism divested itself of a place of address, in the second instance, without gaining much more than forty thousand pounds by the traffic.

"Theathricle Obsaarver!" "Theathricle Obsaarver!" greeted Gerald's ears as he descended from his hackney-coach; and looking around, he saw crowds of men, women, girls, and boys, flourishing on high the printed penny sheet, which, it is worthy of remark, suggested to a London plagiarist the similarly-named, and even similarly-mottoed digest of actors and of stage concerns, since and at present sold very extensively in Bow-street, Brydges-street, Covent-garden, and along the Strand, every evening, from six to seven o'clock; the only instance, perhaps, of English imitation of Dublin literature.

Gaining the bottom of a spacious sweep of steps which led up to the first-tier of boxes, Gerald's anticipations of a half-empty house began to fail him. The stairs were crowded

with well-dressed men and women, standing still, until those who had preceded them should pass the ordeal of the pay-door. He concluded that some unusual interest drew a full audience upon this particular evening; and looking over his late purchase, "The Theathricle Obsaarver," found himself borne out in this judgment. In fact, the attractions of the evening were numerous, as he gathered from different paragraphs of the dramatic gazette. First of all, (for evidently it claimed to be so considered,) officers of the —th, Flood's regiment, after having ensured to themselves exclusion from private parties in Dublin by a want, or by the affectation of a want of sufficient gallantry, commonly called good-manners, had come to the theatre, upon previous evenings, to stand on the stairs and in the lobbies, for the purpose of tormenting all the Dublin beauties who passed in; and many were the spirited reproofs they had met from the high-blooded friends and protectors of those beauties, until it became believed, as a kind of climax to their own well-known declarations of, "the —th never dance;"—"the —th never drink lemonade,"—&c., that "the —th never fight," either;—and upon the

present evening, they were expected to be again encountered, playing the same stupid pranks, and subjecting themselves to the comment of being well qualified to insult a lady, but not so well disposed to afford explanation or satisfaction for the manful feat, or even to feel the rejoinder it provoked, in the way that gentlemen and soldiers generally feel it.

Next, upon the list of attractions, were the following facts. A London female singer (since vanished from theatrical life) had lately made her *debut* before a Dublin audience, and quickly became a great and universal favourite. It happened that a poetical member of the University produced a very tragical tragedy (no one was left to give it out for repetition) upon the Dublin boards, and when he came to take his benefit night, he asked this lady to sing some cheering song, after the fall of the curtain, to try and do away with the baneful effects of his general massacre, but she would not. Thereupon, hundreds of his fellow-collegians proclaimed war against the *Prima Donna*, and repaired to the theatre, each night of her performance, armed with bludgeons, bed-posts, and, as they boasted, thigh-bones, procured from

the College dissecting-room, proposing not only to raise such a clatter by means of their lungs, and the formidable weapons mentioned, as would prevent a note of her songs being heard beyond the orchestra, but determined to knock down whoever might feel inclined to take the lady's part, or to restore quiet and good order in the house. And they had been quite successful in both ways, upon the first night of the row, and this was to be the second night of their classic campaign against the promising female apprentice of a speculating music-master. The last attraction for the crowds of gentle and simple that continued to pour into the theatre, was the individual who, a few weeks before, had monopolized all the interest of the public; namely, the singing-lady, herself; the perpetrator of the outrage (which her master would not let her avoid) against the dignity and literature of T. C. D.

After making himself acquainted with these facts, Gerald moved slowly up-stairs on the outskirts of the crowd. He had proceeded but a little way, when a group of three officers of the —th appeared lounging against the

balustrades, and peering with half-closed, or widely-staring eyes, into the faces of every lady they chose to select for such a silly mode of annoyance; while their legs and feet were so disposed as to place their spurs in wait for a stray flounce, or, perhaps, for an incautious ankle. A fashionable and delicate young female, who absolutely stumbled over one of their protruded limbs, burst into tears as she passed them. Gerald's half-Irish blood boiled, and he was springing up to say something very hostile, when one of the lady's male protectors, a young and handsome man, saved him the trouble, by stepping back, after he had left his party on the lobby.

"It was you, Sir, who incommoded the lady that has just gone up," began the champion, taking out his card-case, and holding it in his hand, as he confronted the immediate offender of the group.

The person he addressed only looked with an affectation of stolid surprise into the answering faces of his friends, and then down the staircase.

"You do not deny it?" resumed the chival-

rous catechist, "and I am at liberty to demand your apology to that lady, or to term your conduct gross and ungentlemanlike?"

Still no answer: the dandies began to speak with each other upon some indifferent topic, while the challenger held out his card.

"That is my name; I require yours," he continued. The bold dragoon at last raised his glass to his eye, and curiously scrutinized the card, at some distance. Then he half held out the broad top of his cap to receive it: the gentleman placed it thereon. He inclined the cap sideways: it fell off; and again he seemed attentively considering it as it lay on the dusty stairs.

"Puppy!" cried the champion, "'tis as honourable a name as any of your set; and if by this you mean to treat it with disrespect, and to refuse your name in return, take from me, at least, a name you have earned,—coward! —and let me farther inform you, that if I had a whip, I would flog you out of the theatre."

After his piece of indignant oratory, the young gentleman went to join his party. Gerald, following him, passed the gallant exquisites; and while neither the reprehended person

nor his friends seemed conscious that any thing unusual had occurred, this was Gerald's question to himself:—"Dare these fools play such a part in the lobbies of Covent-garden or of old Drury? I do not mean, could they do so with impunity, or with this stupid affectation of indifference to the anger of men every way their equals; but would they have the heart to play it amongst Englishmen? They would not. And why, then, amongst Irishmen?—Because their national contempt for the country influences their personal estimation of its people. Because, high-blooded English aristocrats, as they are, all their hereditary egotism fills them with the tranquil pride of a superior race of beings. For there can be no cowardice in it, after all; there is not—except the cowardice of cruelty; the idiots did good work in the Peninsula, and are ready to uphold their character the next opportunity.—Ay, Ireland! 'tis just an instance of the estimation in which you are holden by your neighbours,—your half-Irish, as well as your whole Irish, population,—and nothing more; if, indeed," continued Gerald, unconsciously expressing in its first defined shape a notion he had lately been vaguely conceiving—"if, indeed, it does not serve

to supply an additional reason why all your children, of every class and degree, should firmly unite in forming a national character, which would protect you from such insults; instead of perpetuating, as they do, the sorry squabbles that deprive you of the one, and ensure you the other."

A loud uproar in the theatre interrupted Gerald's philosophy, as he looked round for a box-keeper to show him to a seat. He entered a box in the second-tier, of which all the places except one or two had previously been filled by young men, armed with massive sticks, and mostly attired in heavy outside coats, buttoned up to their chins. They stood on the seats, before him and beside him, pounding the floor with their cudgels, and groaning, hissing, whooping, and roaring, "Off! off," while the young and interesting object of their dislike went through an exaggerated mad-scene on the stage, dressed in white, and her long hair let down, in equal portions, over each polished shoulder, according to the prescriptive mode of costume for female stage-madness, since the early days of Belvidera, at least. And, heaven knows she had reason to be mad in earnest at the persecu-

tion she was suffering; for not a shriek of her modulated frenzy reached Gerald's ear; although her widely-strained mouth and rolling eyes, and the expression of her attitudes—(little inferior, he thought, to the graceful energy of O'Neil)—plainly told her dramatic situation. The boxes opposite to him, at each side of him, and indeed the whole of the two-shilling-gallery, seemed occupied by young gentlemen similarly attired, armed, and engaged, with those amongst whom Gerald found himself; so that it was a grand, stunning, fiendish kind of uproar, kept up without an instant's abatement or variation.

The performance appeared to be an English translation of a regular Italian opera. A knight, the hero of the piece, personated, Gerald believed, by Mr. Horn, came out to relieve the mad heroine of her soliloquy, and began to sing to her. She replied, in all the natural effect of dialogue regulated by quavers and semiquavers; still the noise went on vigorously; not a sound could be caught from either. The knight lost his temper. With a sudden stamp, he wheeled round to the audience, taking the lady by the hand; and then

he pulled off his fine helmet, and his lips moved rapidly, as if making a speech. Treble thunders roared through the house. He stamped again and led the lady off.

The scene changed, new performers appeared, and at length, as if to rest themselves, and husband their powers for the re-entrance of the poor heroine of the evening, the champions of Trinity College literature grew a little quiet. In the pause, Gerald critically took a survey of the house. It reminded him of Covent-Garden, on a diminished scale; with the addition of wreaths of shamrock running round the proscenium, and round the motto "*Ceadmille phalteagh*," that is, (translating from the pure Irish,) "a hundred thousand welcomes"—the motto tastefully put up by a cockney manager in something of the spirit of Will Boniface's welcomes to his guests,—"or," continued Gerald, pursuing this thought, "if not so stupidly conceived, it must have been conceived in humbug towards an Irish audience, who, according to this clever manager, or his cabinet, are eager to give three cheers for his hospitality, after purchasing it at the door. Yes, so it is; every hoaxer of Ireland, and of Irish feeling, from the meanest to the highest, whe-

ther he speculate on pounds, shillings, and pence, or upon servile hands and hearts, thinks he has nought to do but to stick a shamrock in his hat, or give them a dinner or a dance, or promise to drink their healths in a hot tumbler of whiskey punch, and they will roar for him, he is sure, or fight for him,—yea, with one another, if need be,—and ask no better sport. And is not this, Ireland, another instance of the estimate of your claims in 'the sister island?' And does it not contain another appeal to you, so to consolidate and sober down your aggregate character, as to present a moral front which such sneers as these durst not venture to sport with?"

Gerald was again interrupted in his theories. While scarce a female of any rank appeared in the second-tier of boxes, the dress-circle bloomed and sparkled with Dublin beauty and fashion, attended by peaceable friends of the other sex. From the back of his noisy box, he saw into the back of one of those more orderly ones, and, over the heads of four rows of people, softened, and almost visionary, in the shade and the distance, saw, too, a face which riveted his glance, and abstracted his attention from every other object and occurrence. The lady had turned

her head, as if chidingly, towards that part of the house which again began to distract her study of the stage. Gerald quickly glanced to the features of her seeming companions on the same row, but none of them resembled those of the Gore family; "although there sits," he said, "'the flower of her garden,' as Flood satirically called Maria, looking much more unlike herself, and much more like her fancied double, than ever before I thought she did."

Two places were empty on her row, and she and her unknown friends sat a little parted from each other: the box-door opened, and three of the —th, perhaps the same individuals Gerald had observed on the stairs, entered, and straddling over the seat between her and them, stood up before the whole party. An elderly gentleman, next to Gerald's "flower of her garden," arose at the same time, and seemed warmly expostulating with the intruders, who took no notice of his energy, except by turning round, and simultaneously mounting their eye-glasses, to pour in a volley of investigation almost close at the lady's nose. A cry of "shame! shame!" escaped from the pit. Gerald loudly joined it. His belligerent box-companions, still at leisure

to engage in any desultory row, during the absence of the *Prima Donna* from the stage, more loudly seconded him.

"Turn them out!" continued "the many-headed monster of the pit."

"Turn them out!" responded Gerald's allies; and, in the fervour of his indignation, "Turn them out!" cried Gerald himself.

The lady got up, along with her party, and was the first to move towards the door, when it appeared that, from accident or design, a spur had grappled her by the flounce, and Gerald understood her gesticulation to be the accompaniment of a request to its martial proprietor, to stoop and free her from the unwilling alliance thus formed between them. But even to this appeal the dandy and his companions remained adamant; and while the disapprobation of the whole house gained an angry climax, Gerald burst out of his box, followed by the cheering crowd who had occupied it with him.

In his haste, and his ignorance of the lobbies and staircases, he soon found himself alone, running along an empty and dark passage. It took some time to find his way back again to the lobbies, and still more to discover the box

he was so anxious to gain. A rumble of discordant voices assisted him, however, on his way. He followed the sound, and now heard it illustrated by more than one hard knock and vehement thump. In a few seconds, his allies rushed past him, huddling the —th heroes towards the entrance to the theatre. He allowed them to pour on, and arrived at the box. Neither the lady who had caused the commotion, nor any of her friends, were to be seen in it.

He hastened down to the hall; many groups of ladies and gentlemen stood outside the entrance-door, as if waiting for their carriages; the ladies muffled in shawls or silk cloaks. A distant tumult at the extreme end of the piazza, seemed to indicate that "the Collegians" were accomplishing their purpose of ejecting the —th men into the very street. And yet a single officer of that gallant regiment stood quietly at the backs of one of the groups that had attracted Gerald's notice, outside the door: and the person he seemed most anxious to be near to, was a lady muffled and hooded in a brown silk mantle. Gerald also stepped closer, and looked on observantly. This lady, of all her party, ap-

peared young; notwithstanding that her cloak disguised her figure, the air and character of youth played about her; and she certainly leaned on the arm of the elderly gentleman who had remonstrated with the exquisites in the box. Gerald became still more attentive.

In a short time he could perceive that the officer said something in a low tone at the lady's ear, to which her only reply seemed to be a closer muffling of her cloak.

"If you are not known to that lady, you can have no right to address her, Sir," whispered Gerald, in his turn, at the ear of the supposed offender. The officer slightly started perhaps; but, without a reply, quite turned his back upon his monitor. Gerald stood still, to note what effect his warning would produce. After an instant's pause, the military gallant cautiously moved his head, as if to observe the features and person of his self-constituted warder. Gerald looked away, not wishing to appear conscious of the scrutiny. The next moment he resumed his watchfulness, and saw the officer gently tap the lady on the shoulder. At this he lost all self-command; sprang to her side, and crying, "Desist, Sir!" raised his arm to

push the dragoon back. With the hand unoccupied by her elderly protector, she seized Gerald's wrist, whispering—"*Arrêtez vous dans le nom d'une des amies de la jeune et belle Justine.*"

At the same instant, the officer of the —th turned, with a slight affected laugh, into the theatre, and, as he passed the lamp over the door, Gerald was almost sure he recognized Flood's features. Indignant, for many reasons, with his old class-mate, Gerald would have sprung after him, but that a carriage drove up close to "the friend of the young and beautiful Justine;" and as she and her party prepared to get into it, he was prompted, by a still more lively interest, to venture a few words with the lady before her departure. "I hope that gentleman's rudeness has not much shocked you," he said, still at her side, but deprived by the hood of her cloak from observing her features, which he was anxious to see.

She answered in French, betraying, as her first French sentence had done, every tone of the familiar of Père la Chaise.

"Fear nothing on my account—indeed, you *had* little to fear."

" Perhaps nothing, Madam : perhaps my interference alone has offended you."

" Impossible; it was well meant."

" But not as much calculated to please as the freedom it challenged," sulked Gerald.

" Quite as much."

" Allow me to suppose, then, that the gentleman has not the honour of being an object of great interest to ' the friend of the young and beautiful Justine ?' "

" He is nothing to me."

" Charming Maria !" continued Gerald, growing ardent, in rather a desperate kind of way, as she prepared to mount the carriage-step, assisted by her elderly friend; " answer me one other question,—give me time for one other."

" Though your mode of address is very strange, I will gratify you :" she spoke a word to her companion, and both stood still.

" Why did you hesitate last night to reply to my message by Flood ?—and what did you mean by vexing me about some puzzle or other, which he and you seemed to agree you had got me into ?"

After a considerate pause, she said—" Upon

the whole of that subject I refuse to say any thing for the present."

"But must you be as silent to-morrow?"

"I must."

"Well, promise me only this,—promise to speak French to me to-morrow, if we should meet."

"Again I am bound to answer—No;—and now good-night."

"Good-night, Lady of Riddles," said Gerald, taking her hand to assist her into the carriage; and though his words were bitter, he unconsciously hazarded a very gentle pressure.

"Good-night, *Thane of Cawdor*," she rejoined.

The carriage drove off, while Gerald stood gazing after it in no slight emotion. Two distinct feelings agitated him. His fancy or his vanity had suggested that, as Flood would say, the very most remote indication of a return was vouchsafed to his pressure; and now he chilled at the thought that her quotation might mean a recurrence to her former prognostic in another country.

CHAPTER II.

ABANDONING the idea of waiting at the door to meet Flood coming out of the theatre, which he had at first proposed to do, Gerald hastened to his hotel, and called for the English papers of that day, as also for the file of the last week, and with trembling hands looked over the announcements of recent deaths. Nothing appeared to confirm his suspicions, or to bear out the sibyl-like salutation just conferred upon him, in the light, at least, in which he interpreted it. And now he asked himself how he could for a moment have permitted the allusion to disturb him. When it had before been more broadly made, his brother's own letter exposed its absurdity; and although sufficient time had since elapsed to allow of a possible return of Lord Clangore's distemper, without Gerald's being advised of the misfortune, still he could

not contemplate any such result as that insinuated in the application to him of the wierd woman's first augury to Macbeth. Or, if his brother had indeed experienced a dangerous relapse, although the persons who surrounded him in London should not, in that case, know whither to direct a letter to Gerald, surely they would have sent one to Augusta; and she, aware of his continued sojourn in Dublin, would as surely have communicated the event to him; and since she had not done so, she could have received no such intimation; consequently there was no cause to render necessary such a one to her; and, again, no reason for Gerald's fretting himself about the silly, if not heartless and cruel words which had at first startled him so much.

He dismissed the matter from his mind, and amid a bustle of exceedingly vague and perplexing notions of the lady who had given him so great a shock, fell asleep at a late hour.

It was past noon when he awoke next day; and, as had been the case the previous morning, an attendant knocked to give him a note; Gerald asked from whom it came? The man did not know. A country-looking woman, young,

and apparently a servant, had just left it below, without any explanation. Gerald stared at the superscription; it was written in stiff characters, and slanted towards the corners of the note. He opened the singular document, and recognized the hand, or, at all events, the kind of hand, in which the mysterious letter addressed to him in the Rockite cabin on the coast had been written.

"You did very wrong in not following my advice when I wrote to you before. Your stealthy escape from the cabin, and your encounter with the wounded lad, placed you in great peril, and might have been attended with the worst consequences. Had you remained quiet, according to my directions, until three o'clock that day, the friend I promised you would have appeared, and ensured you some unexpected happiness; besides, your arm need not have been broken, nor your mind since tantalized with uncertainty and doubt, on various points.

"I now write to offer you new advice, which I hope you will more closely attend to, for your own sake. By the day after to-morrow some-

thing may become known to you which must compel you to visit your sister at Lower-Court. If, however, you shall not be so compelled, do not hesitate, longer than that day, to repair to her, notwithstanding. Your happiness as well as hers demands the measure: and, for your farther inducement, learn, that by obeying these commands, all your present mysteries are to be cleared up; every one you want to see, to know, and to comprehend, placed fully under your observation; and some individuals whom you do *not* want either to see or to know, introduced to your unbounded love and confidence.

"Meantime, hearken to my farther injunctions upon other matters. While you remain in Dublin, do not repeat to any living creature the questions you asked, last night, under the piazzas at the theatre: do not directly, or indirectly, allude to the subject they concerned. Much depends on that: when you re-appear to-morrow (for you cannot to-day) in Stephen's-green, speak, act, and even look, as if no such topic had ever interested your mind. In fact, you will be allowed no opportunity to behave otherwise; and if you show a disposition to do

so, prepare yourself to brave frowns and indignation which you cannot withstand.

" I would counsel you on yet another point. You are angry with a very old friend, for many reasons; but particularly because you think he invented a story about leaving Dublin, yester morning, while you saw him late last night. But on this account, at least, restore him to your good opinion. When he wrote to inform you of his intended route to the town of ——, he really was under orders to repair thither; within an hour of the time at which he should have been in his saddle, contrary orders reached him not to move till this morning; but now, indeed, he is on his march; I am authority for the fact.

" Farewell. As you love your sister or yourself, implicitly obey the commands of this letter: commands, I say; for she who saved you from the waves, who housed you, clothed you, gave you to eat and to drink, and smoothed your pillow, may surely use the word."

Well! if Gerald had ever before been interested by a letter, this one interested him. Who was its writer? Certainly the individual

to whom, it could not be denied, he stood so much indebted for food, shelter, raiment, and good wine: and, as certainly, that individual must be Maria Gore: because with her he had conversed under the piazzas, and now no one else could allude to the fact. He remembered that the young lady had spent some time with the Knightlies; and during the latter part of that visit she had encountered him, no doubt, at the head of her Amazons, upon the shingles. His former notion, that his protectress was a female of humble rank in life, now gave way, not only under these argumentative associations, but also on account of the style and diction of the letter he held in his hand, which, notwithstanding the successful attempt to vulgarise the writing, bespoke a higher order of mind. He *had* caught a glimpse of her face on the shingles, then, although during his relapse into faintness, she afterwards contrived, obviously through motives of delicacy, to stay out of his view. And this explained the incongruity of his getting such a costly supper under the roof of the miserable cabin:—she had provided it. It also determined the question of his having first met her in France; for when he recognized

her features on the moonlight strand, he did not then know her as Maria Gore, but as the lady of Père la Chaise. But at the last conclusion offered by all his reasoning, Gerald's vanity sent most pleasing tingles through his frame. If any thing was evident in the whole case, it was this—Maria Gore loved him.

No matter about her little evasions, and her little puzzles, (and Gerald now forgave her them all, nay even the cruel allusions to Lord Clangore,) from first to last her acts showed an affectionate interest in him and his concerns. And for many of those acts he owed her much. She had very probably saved his life. And must he not feel unboundedly grateful? Must he not warmly return her very flattering preference? Nay, he did return it. He loved her dearly and deeply; and he would prove that he did. He would snatch her, (poor, poor Maria!) he would snatch her, at once, from the domestic misery that surrounded her. He would request permission of Mr. Gore to address her; yes, that very day; Heaven alone could tell how long she might have a paternal roof to cover her head. Allowing for whatever little harmless mysteries she chose to keep

him in, he agreed, literally, to observe, indeed, her written commands of that morning; still, without breaking any of them, he might surely unbosom himself to her father. Oh, that dear, pressure of her hand at the carriage-door last night! But hold;—"of *her* hand?" queried Gerald. And he got angry with himself for the evident absurdity of doubting for a moment that it *was* Maria Gore he had seen at a distance in the theatre, and afterwards spoken with under the piazza.

"I wish, however, I could ascertain two simple points connected with that last night's adventure," added Gerald.—

Mr. Frederic Augustus Gore was announced.

"Now I can be satisfied at once," he resumed.

The smiling and gracious young gentleman entered. He had been specially sent by his father and mother, to hope for the pleasure and honour of Gerald's presence to-morrow morning, at ——'s church, during the performance of the marriage ceremony between Sir John Lumley and Miss Gore, and afterwards at breakfast in Stephen's-green.

"Miss Flint, you *are* a witch," cogitated

Gerald, after he had expressed his ready assent to their polite invitation, and offered his best congratulations; "and," he continued, "if you prove as correct in other good auguries, poor Gore will be soon relieved of some unpleasant inmates, at present in his house, and poor Maria taken out of immediate jeopardy."

Mr. Frederic Augustus assured his "dear Mr. Blount," that his father would have personally waited upon him, but that the bustle of the whole house, preparing for the sudden event, (it was, indeed, sudden and unexpected, but Sir John would have his way,) did not allow of the absence of any member of the family, save his useless self, Mr. Frederic Augustus.

Gerald knew all about that. He also called to mind the warning contained in the note he had just read, to the effect that it would be impossible for him to re-appear in Stephen's-green that day, which seemed now fully explained, by the fact of Mr. Gore's family, Maria particularly, being too busily engaged to receive the visit of an acquaintance. And as this could have been anticipated only by a member of that family, Gerald here arrived at another proof of

the identity of his correspondent; and in the course of conversation with his visitor, he proposed the intended questions which were to afford him downright certainty.

"He had been to the theatre last night," he said, "and thought he saw Miss Maria Gore in the house?"

"Yes," her brother answered, "Maria had gone in the vain hope of hearing the new singer."

"With friends, or with her own family?" again asked Gerald.

"With friends; none of her own family accompanied her."

"And, I believe, I afterwards saw her step into a carriage at the door," pursued Gerald, exceedingly pleased: "Excuse me, but I am curious enough to ask if you happen to recollect whether or not your sister went out in a cloak last night, and what was its colour?"

"Let me see," paused Mr. Frederic Augustus, smiling rather expressively—"yes; I led her to her friend's carriage, when they called to take her up, and I am quite sure she had on a cloak, a silk one, light brownish."

Gerald, his eyes sparkling, begged to thank

his young friend very much; he was exceedingly obliged to him.

"And how well your sister speaks French," he resumed, extending his questions to a point he had not at first thought of approaching.

"'Tis said so, by good judges," assented Mr. Frederic Augustus.

"And I venture to pique myself upon being one," said Gerald; "she must have got her accent in Paris, surely?"

"Why, yes; Maria was in Paris for some time, certainly; though with a set that her family did not wish she should accompany thither, or, indeed, anywhere—the Knightlies."

"Oh, confound the Knightlies! no matter about them—but was this very long ago?"

"Not at all: just before, and indeed, at the time of Bonaparte's return from Elba."

Gerald shook his young friend's hand—neither he nor that young friend clearly knowing why—and then he professed himself immensely glad of his visit, on its own account, and hoped they might know each other better, and like each other better; and as this was so busy a day in Stephen's-green, and the ladies necessarily closeted and plotting together, and Mr.

Frederick Augustus, as he had himself declared, quite useless in their councils, perhaps he would do Gerald the very great pleasure of taking dinner with him.

"Certainly;" Mr. Frederick Augustus felt much gratified at the prospect of cultivating his dear Mr. Blount's acquaintance, and he would only just step back to tell his friends at home of his good fortune, and afterwards get through some few calls, and then he would be Gerald's own for the evening.

They parted upon this happy understanding.

To do fit honour to the palate of his very agreeable brother-in-law elect, Gerald summoned the waiter with his yard-long dinner-bill, and after solemn and acute discussion with that accomplished counsellor, ordered an elegant and ample board. At the appointed hour the young gentlemen sat down to dinner. Mr. Frederic Augustus praised the dishes in a knowing connoisseur style, and the wines commanded his still more decided eulogy, and, somewhat to Gerald's surprise, (at first,) his more substantial patronage, too. But Gerald's new feelings, and his hospitable responsibilities, together with the gradual influence of the good

liquor itself, soon made him forget his friend's liberal bumpers in his own. Upon that memorable evening, he drank half a bottle of sherry, half a bottle of champagne, and two glasses of port, during dinner, and his fair share of five bottles of claret afterwards—ten times more wine than he had ever imbibed at a sitting in his life before; and it followed, in course, that, about twelve o'clock, he had opened his inmost heart and soul to his dearest friend; obtained his generous wishes for success with his beloved sister; filled a bumper to her health; then to each other's immutable friendship; then, greatly to Gerald's sympathetic joy, Mr. Frederic Augustus proposed another bumper to Augusta Blount; then disclosed an attachment for that enchanting creature which had long lain in his bosom, unbreathed to a human being in the world; upon which Gerald pledged him his hand, that if the heavenly Maria only consented to smile upon him, he should in return have his, Gerald's, best word with Augusta; and lastly, they embraced, and the waiter entering, found them shedding tears.

Before this, however, Gerald had opened his purse, as well as his heart, to his dear Frede-

rick, just to enable him to get rid of a cursed dun, whom he did not wish his father should know any thing about: and when the young gentleman delicately accused himself of trespassing in such a kind of way, his host, with a hiccup or two, spread out on the table the remaining portion of the bundle of notes Flood had lent him, and extending his arms, and sitting back in his chair, cried—"Have all *I* have, my dear Gore! How can you—(hic)—make one word of this trash—these—(hic)—these paltry rags between us?"

To his regret, however, though not to his disadvantage, his dear Gore really would not be Gerald's debtor for more than about fifty pounds, along with what he had already borrowed; and, sighing loudly over the hesitations and degeneracy of the too-cautious friendships of the day, Gerald put up his diminished roll of "paltry rags."

How the night ended he could not tell. Shortly after the scene of tears, Mr. Frederic Augustus, his sister, the decanters, the candles, and every other person and thing, faded from Gerald's mind and vision, and he awoke at an early hour of the morning to groan and shudder,

in reality, over his errors and debauch of the night, and to detest Mr. Frederick Augustus, who, he now well remembered, had not been half as intoxicated as himself, and yet who had declared a deathless attachment for Lady Augusta Blount, and borrowed about a hundred pounds of her brother. Burning blushes covered Gerald's cheeks, when he remembered that he had not only permitted such a person to proclaim his speculating love for his sister, but had actually engaged to urge the young gentleman's suit with Augusta.

As to his own passion for Miss Maria Gore, irresistibly, though very unreasonably, that also seemed to wane in proportion to his change of sentiments towards her clever brother. And at first, such was the case without any seeming provocation; soon after, however, Gerald thought he discovered a marked blemish in her character, and one that called upon him to correct his extravagant admiration for the young lady—"Which was not admiration, after all," he continued, "but a kind of fidgety interest, produced by a doubt—a—I don't know what." Here, however, was Gerald's demur. Maria Gore's father and mother were surrounded by

dreadful embarrassments; every article of furniture in their house was watched by bailiffs, under execution; the unfortunate Gore, himself, was watched by another bailiff, after having been arrested; nothing could present a more afflicting picture of domestic misery; nothing could be more calculated to appeal to the feelings of a child, particularly of a daughter; in the midst of such circumstances, and aware of them, as of course, she was,—how, then, could Maria Gore exhibit, not merely smiles and cheerfulness, but the almost levity of which Gerald now accused her?—how could she find heart, (if heart formed any portion of her,) to set Captain Flood upon drawing caricatures; to league with him in laughing at the massacre-panic of the night before the last; to titter with him, in the back drawing-room, over the notion of whatever silly "puzzles" she contemplated towards himself, Gerald? Did not all this proclaim a want of feeling, of amiability, of conduct, which must totally unfit her for fireside happiness?

But what was Gerald to do?—By his professions to Mr. Frederic Augustus, at least, he stood committed. Nay, if his memory proved

not very treacherous, he feared he had even gone so far as to engage his dear Fred. to open the affair to his father. And if the willing Mercury only recollected things as well as Gerald did, (of the converse of which there seemed no reasonable apprehension,) it would scarce be doubted that, before this time, he had faithfully discharged his trust.

Gerald was interrupted by a statement from his attendant to the following effect. "Mr. and Mrs. Blake, having engaged themselves to ride to ——'s church in Sir John Lumley's carriage, had sent theirs, with their best compliments, to wait on the Honourable Gerald Blount;" and it was at the door. He hastened down-stairs.

The message seemed to import that he should find the carriage empty: when he got into it, however, this was not the case. Miss Flint sat in the corner next the door, holding herself back, as if to escape his notice until he should enter; and then, gleeishly sinking her head between her shoulders, and holding up her finger to her nose, she giggled out—"Think of this!—we two going to church together! and nobody the wiser, only Sam, on the box!"

Gerald, wishing her in his heart any where

else, expressed much gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Blake for having provided him with so agreeable a travelling companion.

"My gracious! you 're out; 'tisn't that at all; how slow you are at a joke! No; but 'twill make you die laughing! I was tramping along in my clogs—see!"—she held them dangling in her hand —"for every body knows *I* 'm not worth a carriage, and for that good reason don't sport one, not like other people that *do*, and are no more worth it than myself—think of that!—but on I was tramping, and not liking the walk, (for the streets are quite puddle,) when the Blakes' carriage passed me, empty; and after bidding Sam good-morrow, and asking him to stop a bit, he tells me they had sent it for you; and then, says I to myself, wait now, till I have a joke out of Mr. Blount, and a laugh at 'em all, in spite of 'em; for you must know, they all told me I couldn't have a seat to church this morning in any of their carriages or things. Between ourselves, they 're beginning to cut me, for a reason they have,—just for fear, *I* 'd cut *them*" (winking); "and besides, they suspect I know a little too much, maybe; but no matter; all's one for that: who 'll care most about it, I

wonder? And so, 'Sam, good boy,' says I, 'this is lucky for me; you see what a puddle the flags are; and Mr. Blount is my very particular friend, and will be very glad to find me in the carriage, instead of finding it empty; so let me in;' and so he did, and I bid him for his life to say nothing to you till you made me out yourself—hi, hi!—and here I am, after making you stare like any thing; and going off to see dear Selina married, in Mrs. Blake's fine carriage, that she would as soon see down the Liffy as me in it. I told my mind about Blake refusing to wag a finger for poor dear Gore, and she heard of it, and hates me like pison; let her; here are you and I, snug, whether she does or no—hi, hi!—think of that!"

During the short pause that ensued, Gerald, too chivalrously deeming himself called on to say something, very disingenuously declared that Miss Flint only spoke the fact when she assured Sam how happy he would be to meet her.

"You needn't tell me—I know it very well. I liked you the first time we met, in London, and I saw *you* liked *me;* and I have shown how much I think of you since, depend on it; you

know more of my mind on a great many things than a great many people that I have been brought up with; and why shouldn't you? Nothing could be handsomer than your donation to our society,—that is so sure you 'll be such a friend to it in every way; to say nothing of your birth and your talents, and your being a good and a clever creature, entirely;—and so, I made little ado in opening my mind to you the other night, just to give you a hint, for your good, that would show you what kind of people you got in with here in Dublin;—and didn't I? And was I much out in what I said about that snappish, hoity-toity lady, Selina; and her old Adonis, Sir John, eh?"

"Certainly not; your penetration quite surprised me," replied Gerald.

"Well; wait, now; I have another little whisper to give you, that I got, last night, from a little bird of mine. The last time I opened my mind to you, I told you, you know, that poor Gore would not give Selina to Lumley, unless Sir John settled as much on her as would take him out of all his troubles; and sure enough the fond old creature has done what they asked of him, and, so far, so good; but would you

believe it? It 's now another point if Selina will do as much as her father hopes, though neither her father nor mother suspects any thing, nor no one else but you and me, and my little bird that I told you of: only this much I just say; that, whether there has been any underhand agreement between her and her future lord and master—who is no fool, after all, except on her account;—or whether it has come into her head, of her own accord, that his estate can't afford such a pull on it, and leave them as well off as the pride of her heart wants to be, for the hereafter; however this may turn out, in the long-run, I can tell you what (as I said) her own father couldn't tell you; and this is it;—ever since the marriage settlements were drawn up, Selina has employed an attorney of her own, under the rose; and he has been down to visit two of Sir John's estates, and afterwards was closeted with her, incog.; and, last night, my sister's husband told my sister, and my sister herself told me, that he met this attorney at dinner yesterday, and sat beside him; and, as they are great friends, if the cat wasn't quite let out of the bag, one of her paws was;—and I 'd make no wonder at your hearing some-

thing in an hour or two that will look very odd to you; only, I am sure of one thing;—every body will do their best to get poor Gore out of the clutches of the bailiff that is now taking care of him, before the rest of the creditors send in detainers; indeed, so far, the business has been well managed; and then, if he is made a free man, and gets as much as takes him and his poor dear wife, and their idle son, to France, out of harm's way, and receives yearly remittances afterwards—to no great amount to be sure, as France is a cheap place;—and the house, and the furniture, ay, and the carriage too, left to pay off the present executions; why, if this is done for him, what need he complain, after all? Tell me that! People must take care of themselves, you know; and he ever and always was an improvident man to his poor family, and are they to suffer for him?"

"You have made no arrangement for Mr. Gore's youngest daughter, Miss Flint."

"Ah, my poor Maria! what is *she* to do? No, indeed; I never thought of her going to France with them; I don't think they 'd take her; they don't like her; neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister likes her; they never did; she has something in her quite dif-

ferent from them all. And then she took up opinions of her own, lately, on the Castle politics, and the people of the country—the Papists, and such poor creatures, you know—and used to speak them out plump, no matter who happened to be by; and got in with the Knightlies—a bad set, though they have your poor sister among them—don't be angry with me;—and worst of all, was better liked, for the last year or so, by the men, than Selina; a grand offence; though how could she help it, I'd be glad to know? They kept her back long enough, in all reason, till she was one-and-twenty; though I don't say that putting forward your little frumpish misses of from sixteen to nineteen is doing a wise thing, and therefore won't blame her mother and sisters for that; not a bit; but, as I was saying, one way or another poor Maria was the black sheep of the family, and no one envied her life among them; indeed 'twas well known that they never made her one in any of their secrets; never opened their mind to her; and I shouldn't at all wonder if, at this moment, she is quite ignorant of the bailiffs being in the house—and—"

"Indeed!" interrupted Gerald; "I'm very glad of that."

"You are! why so?"

"I 'm very much surprised, I mean; 'tis so very strange."

"Is that all? my goodness gracious, if you didn't make me wonder! but no, indeed; depend upon it, they keep all these things from poor Maria, fearing she might blab before people she sometimes goes out with in Dublin, against their will; maybe that 's the reason."

"People her family do not know?" inquired Gerald, with an object in his question.

"Yes, the Knightlies and their friends."

"Pray, Miss Flint, can you say if she has lately been out with any of that set?"

"Yes—let me see—yes, to be sure; the Knightlies themselves were in town until the evening before the last, and she went to the theatre with some of them."

"Then," thought Gerald, "the elderly gentleman upon whose arm I saw her leaning must have been my great fright; it is strange I should not have recognized him; meeting him but once, and so long ago, however, may have quite put him out of my head; though I don't see how that could distinctly happen, either."

"But if Miss Maria Gore does not accom-

pany her father and mother to France, what is she to do, Miss Flint?"

"God knows, poor thing! maybe her sisters, much as they dislike her, will have her from one to another, till she gets settled; they can't leave her unprotected, for their own sakes; and then she has other friends amongst us all, and we won't see her badly off, if it comes to that pass. I always liked Maria better than Selina or the other, though they didn't think so; because they being her elders, and out before her, one was obliged to be civil to them, just to keep the family on one's hands; but I did, indeed; ay, in spite of her dry jokes on myself, sometimes; poor dear girl, she had no harm in 'em—but, gracious me!" half screamed Miss Flint, as the carriage stopped, "here we are at the church-door, and every one gone in before us, and we 'll be too late for dear Selina, as sure as a pin—think of that!"

Gerald, ashamed of his situation, held Miss Flint's clogs at the carriage-door, as, tucking up her garments, she bustled down. And he entered the church with a perilous return of all his interest towards Maria Gore, joined to the deepest sympathy for her sad and peculiar po-

sition. If Miss Flint's divining powers were still to be relied on, she stood acquitted of his late accusations of want of filial, indeed of common feeling, and, at the same time, exposed to a future of wretched humiliation and suffering. "What! Maria Gore thrown upon the benevolence of her estranged sisters, and of Miss Flint! —but, tush," he continued; "as yet this is all according to Miss Flint: let us see."

CHAPTER III.

A SCENIC description of Miss Gore's marriage with Sir John Lumley is not to be expected. Abler pens than mine have often dwelt upon the interesting incidents which characterise such a tender and awful ceremony. A few things connected with it shall, however, be noticed.

Mr. Gore stood by, leaning on the arm of (as he accounted for him) "a distant relation who had been all his life at sea, till he came very suddenly to visit him and his family; a most excellent creature, and well esteemed in his profession, although its mannerism followed him into society, and made him a little awkward, and very silent, lest he should commit himself."

Gerald glanced at poor Gore with pity, although with some contempt. Pride, triumph, and hope, lighted up his eye, as he witnessed the

ceremonial which made his favourite daughter Lady Lumley, and promised him summary extrication from his tangled mesh of difficulties and miseries. Towards the conclusion of the marriage, a tear—(welling, Heaven only knew from what source of mixed emotion)—dimmed the eye's brilliancy; the fever-flush deserted his cheeks; and his lips, at last not curved into smiles, grew dry and quivered. When his daughter finally became a wife, and when he stepped forward to salute her—(after first looking for consent into the bailiff's face)—his forehead fell on her neck, and his sobs were heard through the church.

Mrs. Gore stood near him, meantime, smiling as usual, although tears streamed silently down her cheeks also, from the moment the ceremony began.

Maria Gore was one of Selina's bridesmaids. Gerald observed her attentively. She seemed very grave, and looked pale, as if struggling with suppressed emotion. Her eyes rested on her sister, who took no notice of her; perhaps they had had a quarrel before they came to church. When it was her turn to salute the new-made bride, she grew still paler, drew in her under

lip between her teeth, and then threw her arms round her sister; and as she turned away, Gerald saw that profuse tears had at last burst out.

Mrs. Blake looked straight into an empty pew, from first to last, occasionally shrugging up her shoulders at the cold of the church; and, when led by her husband to Selina, held out her own cheek for a kiss.

The bride herself seemed to have been married in a fit of indignation, just kept under, and no more. She returned all the salutations (except one) of her friends, like an offended queen; but her cognizance of that one, (Miss Flint's,) showed more of her ordinary nature. Bathed in showers of sympathy, and of every thing else that was to be expected, Miss Flint, still holding her clogs dangling by their latchets from her finger, sprang at her "love, Selina," and dragging down her head with one hand, and holding her tight round the waist with the other, inflicted, like Petruchio,

—— "Such a clamorous smack,
"That at the parting, all the church did echo;"

while, in the rage of her embrace, her wet clogs left certain very obvious marks of close

acquaintance upon Lady Lumley's lace-dress, and even upon the satin under it. She was literally pushed away by the bride's strong though beautiful arm.

"The happy pair," accompanied by all their friends, returned to breakfast at Stephen's-green, Gerald's mind filled with Maria Gore, and with her recent and deeply-interesting change of character.

Mr. Gore's colour, and his smiles, and his good spirits, quite rallied at the breakfast-table, which was splendidly "furnished forth." He said good things, he told good stories, he laughed loud; but Gerald saw that whenever he put a cup of tea or coffee to his lips, his hand shook fearfully. It was something more than happiness too, or something different from it, which fed his flashing glances.

And those glances often visited Gerald with a peculiar meaning, which the object of them failed not, in tribulation of heart, to interpret in a certain way. They also wandered, from time to time, to Maria Gore, who sat far away from Gerald, still looking profoundly serious. Gerald made but an indifferent breakfast.

While some of the party yet sipped from their

cups, Miss Flint among the number, Mrs. Gore arose, and after looking at Maria, left the room. Her youngest daughter followed. By mere chance Mr. Gore then remembered that he had a word to say to Gerald, and both stood up and repaired to one of the remote windows.

"My dearest boy," said Mr. Gore, trembling all over, as he took Gerald's hands, "allow me to ask you if, when you made your most flattering proposals through my son, last night, you were aware of my poor Maria's portionless lot?"

"Quite," answered Gerald, trembling also.

"But you could not have guessed the present dreadful situation in which her father is placed?"

"With deep regret, I had previously learned it to its full extent."

"Ay!" cried Mr. Gore, starting, as his eye glanced to Miss Flint; "and who was so considerate as to disclose it to you?"

"Excuse me; I am not at liberty to answer: but I knew it."

"You knew of the—the executions?"

"I did."

"And," continued Mr. Gore, while his voice

faltered, and at last failed him,—" of—the—of this man?" nodding his head backward.

" Yes; of that fellow."

" Give me your arm, then."

They walked out of the breakfast parlour together, and ascended to the drawing-room. Maria Gore stood alone near the fire-place, one arm folded under her bosom, the other motionless at her side. She had been looking down as they entered, and did not now raise her head, but only curtsied.

" Are you quite prepared for us, Maria, my love?" asked her father.

" I am, Sir," she answered, in a low but firm voice.

" Here, then, comes Mr. Blount, himself, to try if he cannot prevail on you to be more explicit than you were with me in our conversation of this morning."

" Stop, father," she said, speaking louder, and looking up; Mr. Gore was retiring;—" you know, Sir, I told you that my explanation would be given to Mr. Blount, in answer to his very flattering intimation, while you stood by, or not at all."

" Well, my love, well." Mr. Gore stepped

back, and as he passed close to her, "perverse, unaccountable girl," he added, between his teeth.

"I have already declared to you, Sir, that I entertain no unfavourable opinion of Mr. Blount, but the contrary; that, in fact, I respect and esteem his character and talents."

"To be sure, my treasure; all this has been gone over and over."

"I have also declared in answer to your questions, that it is not because I am pre-engaged in any other 'love-affair,' as you called it, Sir, I must decidedly reject the honour of Mr. Blount's advances."

"Pho, pho! of course, my dear child—of course; and since you have said so much, surely you cannot expect us to be greatly alarmed on the score of whatever other reason you may conjure up; but there is a reason, Maria, and a solid one, why, for your father and mother's sake, you should waive all girlish refinings and hesitations, and meet us, in this matter, just as promptly—I may say, abruptly, as we come to meet you; ay, and our excellent young friend knows that reason, though you do not, Maria."

"You mistake, dear father; I do know it, although not from any confidence placed in me by my family; although my informant is almost a stranger; and although she whispered the question that led to my discovery of your unhappy situation, only within the last hour, at ——'s church."

"She!" cried Mr. Gore—"'tis a woman then?—Miss Flint!"

"Miss Flint, Sir."

"I will have her sent out of the house, this moment—the base gossip!" resumed Mr. Gore, again moving to the door; "but no, no;" checking himself, "that would be but an impotent show of authority, under the circumstances. Maria, you *do* know, then, how absolutely necessary it becomes—(I must speak very, very plainly, my child—ay, even before Mr. Blount)—how absolutely necessary it becomes that—in fact—you should avail yourself of this most honourable opportunity to be protected against the future—and perhaps,—perhaps—" his voice trembled—"perhaps to help your unfortunate father out of his tremendous difficulties, by sharing with him some—some—"

"Dearest father, say no more—" she wept

profusely— "tremendous must your difficulties be, indeed, to call for this no less tremendous humiliation—and, after all, this unnecessary humiliation.

"Maria!" exhorted Mr. Gore, in rising passion, "what folly — what fiend puts this obstinacy into your head? You esteem and respect Mr. Blount; you are engaged in no other affair of the heart; and yet—"

"I can never become his wife."

"Provoking girl! why so? give your important reason in one word;—come! you have promised to do so."

"I have; and I will do so, father; I can never become Mr. Blount's wife, because"—she knelt at his feet—"because I am already the wife of another."

With quickly-uttered ejaculations, both gentlemen started back. But Mr. Gore's voice rose highest.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed; "quite impossible! 'tis only an invention to make me mad!"

"I have never uttered a falsehood to you, in my whole life, Sir—'tis the very truth; I am a married woman, kneeling for your forgiveness and your blessing."

" For my curse ! if indeed I must believe you. Disobedient, unnatural girl ; married to whom ? when ? how ? how long ago ?"

" I was married, the night before the last, *after* my return from the theatre, but *before* my return to your house."

" Merciful Heaven ! I will *not* credit it ! How, I ask you, could it have happened without my consent ? Stand up and answer me !"

She arose, and said, " I am of age, and my husband procured a license."

" Your husband ! God Almighty !—and to whom do you give that name ? what fellow is this, who, aware of his own unworthiness, baseness perhaps, dared not ask you of your father ?"

" He does not merit one word of your description, Sir ; and it was not because he feared you would reject his suit, that he prevailed upon me to become his wife in secret."

" Creature ! let me hear no more of your fulsome, your indelicate praises of him ; but give me his name, at once !"

" There, Sir, you will excuse me ; I am under a solemn promise not yet to divulge his name."

" And you refuse me ?"

"I must, or break almost an oath to my husband, Sir."

"Not caring how you madden your father! Lost, degraded—"

"No, my dear father—not degraded, Sir," she interrupted; "there you mistake, indeed."

"Then why would he have you hide his name?"

"I fear I can never tell *you*, Sir, the reason for that; 'twas a prudent, if not a generous one; and yet, Sir, generous my husband can be, has been, and may yet be; nay, but that your afflicting want of confidence kept me ignorant of the full extent of your present dreadful trials, I am convinced he would not have wished me to enter into a private marriage,—nor asked your permission for an open one, without——"

"Pshaw! he is a fry of those Knightlies."

"He is not, Sir: and now that I at last know of your difficulties, I am just as sure—that although I cannot name him without his permission, it is only necessary for me to ask that permission in order to obtain it; and so, if you allow me, my dear father——"

"Dear father!—dear d————n!—Look there!" he pointed to the half-open door, at

which was seen a man's figure. "Do you know who darkens the threshold of that door?—Do you really know that, this moment, I am watched in my own house— no, not my own house—I have no house—but dogged from room to room by a common ruffian, a catchpole, a bailiff?—Look round you! Do you really know that every thing your eye falls upon, that piano, that table, that chair, that miniature of your mother—Oh heaven of heavens!—and instead of being in a situation to take me out of this hell of troubles, at all events to console me, *you* stand there, *you*, armed with your own disobedience to give my heart the very last blow! Come!"—He seized her wrist, having wrought himself into a frenzy of passion; "you shall *not* stand there to kill me outright!—Nay, while this house remains even nominally mine, you shall not disgrace it with your presence!—off to your bravo, your husband; he is your protector now! but first come take leave of the mother and the sisters you have shamed!—come, I say!"

"Father, dearest father!" she sank again on the carpet, "do not treat me so; I do not quite deserve it; I have been wrong, but not so very

wrong; and on such a day as this is, and from such a house as this is, do not, do not expel me! oh, my dear father, my heart is not, never was dead to a daughter's feeling for you, and for your misfortunes! and if my husband—"

"Damn him! mean, obscure fellow, whoever he is, damn him!—Come! I insist! Do not make me force you!" Force her, however, he almost did across the room, until at last she walked with him. "Give way, fellow!" he cried to the bailiff at the door, and, through it, and down-stairs he still led her; Gerald following, in horror, grief, and consternation.

"A hackney-coach, Sir!" continued Mr. Gore, addressing a servant as he stepped to the parlour,—"Come, Madam!" he flung open the door, and appeared before the bridal party, pale and seemingly almost insane with passion, while he still held Maria tight by the wrist; "here, my good friends,—here, I have brought you another new-married lady—a dutiful, pure-minded, youngest daughter, who, because she is of age, as she says, thought no more than a license necessary to get joined in holy wedlock to some low, intriguing wretch that she fears

even to name to her family. Ay, indeed, 'tis so," with tones of bitter mockery, as Mrs. Gore and her two elder daughters expressed their amazement in abrupt ejaculations. "The night before the last,—and after the play,—and God knows under what roof, by way of her Hymeneal temple,—this delicate, this high-minded young lady changed her maiden name and became a most right honourable wife! Look at her! does she not wear her new dignities well? does not her brow look matronly already; and her glance, her air, and bearing, seem quite ennobled? See! see what an important personage we have had among us, unawares, ever since after the play, the night before the last! Where are her happy mother, and her admiring sisters, to salute her—ay, to bow down to her? Where are all the honours she should get, in return for all the honours she gives? Ignoble creature!" he continued, again bursting out in fury, and dropping her hand, "this moment leave our presence!—hide yourself in your chamber till your hackney-chariot draws up at the door, and then—"

"Mother, mother!" she cried, running across

the room, and falling helplessly at Mrs. Gore's knees, who sat weeping on a sofa.

"Do not touch her!" screamed Mr. Gore, addressing his wife, as she stooped down to embrace her daughter. "I command you, Madam, to give her no parting kiss,—no parting hand! get up and go to your chamber!" stamping at Maria; "get up, or I will drag you up!"

He walked towards her. She rose to her knees; clasped those of her mother fervently; kissed her feet; ran to her sisters and brother, and separately embraced them; and all this without a word; and so rapidly that her father could not interrupt her. Then she looked round for him, and in another instant was clinging to his knees also, as she cried, "Still, still, your blessing, Sir, before I go!"

"Blessing!" he shook her off; "my curse, you mean, and—"

Before he could pronounce another word, Mrs. Gore sprang up screaming, fell on his neck, and put her hand on his mouth. At the same time, she turned her lips that Maria might kiss them; the signal was quickly understood and

answered ; then her mother motioned Maria to leave the room, and was obeyed.

" I will shoot her at my feet if she again appears before me ! I will, by the heavens !" exclaimed Mr. Gore, in a paroxysm of rage. —" And now, Selina," he continued, turning to Lady Lumley, and endeavouring to assume a calm tone, " you are my last and only hope."

" I understand you, Sir," said Selina, " and we shall arrange every thing in another room.— Come, my love," to Mrs. Blake ; and both ladies arose.

" Why needs she accompany us ?" demanded Mr. Gore, in an expression of face that vaguely foreboded something.

" It may be as well that my sister witnesses our interview, Sir ; I should like the approval of so near a member of my family."

He stood still, and looked expressively at her.

" Selina, I do not like this beginning : it promises no good ending. Why should you wish *her* countenance in what you are about to do, unless you intend to do as she has done before you ? But come, I will not anticipate."

" Better not, Sir."

The father and the two sisters left the apartment. We follow them into a back parlour.

"Who is this?" asked Mr. Gore, as he entered the room, pointing to a gentleman fastidiously dressed in black, who stood up from a table and bowed profoundly.

"My private solicitor, Sir," answered Selina.

"Oh,—oho! I beg the gentleman's pardon," bowing even lower than his new acquaintance had done, "and yours, Lady Lumley," repeating his obeisance; "I should have remembered that new dignities require new attendants, ay, and new respect. 'Tis all quite right; just as it should be: yes, the draft, off-hand, which you were to oblige me with, as a simple gift from daughter to father, must now necessarily assume the shape of some important legal document, technically drawn up by your private solicitor, and demanding a formal acknowledgement from Gervis Gore, Esquire. To be sure it must—if, indeed, you doom me to no more than that; let us see:" he effectually curbed himself, and walked steadily to the table from which the attorney had arisen:—"of

course, now, this gentleman and I settle the matter between ourselves?"

"If you please, Sir; I have acted under his advice, and abide by his arrangements."

"Yes, Sir," said the solicitor; "and by the advice of the best counsel, after making all the necessary inquiries, beforehand, as to the extent to which Sir John Lumley's property, real and personal—"

"I think I comprehend, Sir," interrupted Mr. Gore; "pray, do not distress yourself by superfluous explanations; let us to business at once. Take your chair, Sir, and you will oblige me. So"—Mr. Gore sat to the table along with the solicitor—"here are our documents, I see; very good: how do we begin?"

"Gubbins!" called out the attorney, speaking towards the hall: Mr. Gore's legal attendant of the last few days entered.

"We begin this way, if you have no objection, Sir. Gubbins, you are aware that Mr. Pierce, the solicitor in this writ, and your employer, empowers me to settle the debt, and discharge you?"

The bailiff assented.

"Then you may go home; here is your war-

rant to do so, under my name, and here I hold the amount of the debt, costs and all, which I will hand by and by to Mr. Pierce; you have received your own money, day after day?"

"All, except that day's money," the man said.

"There, then, and leave the house."

"Good-morning, Mr. Gore," said the bailiff, as he shuffled off.

"A very good-morning to you, Mr. Gubbins," answered Mr. Gore, "and many, many thanks for your obliging attentions. — Well, Sir," turning to the solicitor, "what is this?" as a folded paper was placed at his hand.

"A draft on the National Bank for two hundred pounds, Mr. Gore."

"For two hundred pounds," repeated Mr. Gore, deliberately—"good."

"To which Mrs. Blake, out of her own private purse, joins one hundred more, at my instance," said Lady Lumley, putting down a note to the amount she mentioned.

"Thank you, my love," resumed Mr. Gore, bowing his head, and smiling, over-graciously, to Mrs. Blake; "'tis your first kind help, and I value it accordingly. Well; these three hun-

dred pounds will scarce pay the executions now in the house, I fear, Sir?"

"It does not seem advisable, upon mature consideration, to meddle with *them*, Sir," replied the attorney.

"That is, they must take their own course, Sir?"

"Yes, Sir."

"That is, again, my house and furniture, my carriage and horses, are no longer mine, Sir?"

"If you glance over this deed, Sir," temporized the attorney, "you will find it a set-off against the momentary and inevitable disadvantages of your present situation."

"A set-off! what a happy word!—a set-off, indeed, for *me*, when it no longer pleases the gracious authorities who decide my fate that I shall stay in my own house, in my native country, perhaps,—a set-off! ha, ha!—well, on with business, however; your deed, Sir! many thanks. So, so!" he muttered over the first part of it; then read aloud; "'And the said Selina, Lady Lumley, hereby covenants and engages for herself, her administrators, executors, or assigns, to pay to the said Gervis Gore, Esq. for and during his natural life, the aforesaid yearly sum of

three hundred pounds sterling, if it shall please him, the said Gervis Gore, Esq. to live out of the jurisdiction of the laws of these realms of Great Britain and Ireland, and so keep his person—dutifully honoured and revered by her, the said Selina, Lady Lumley,—free of all arrests and incarcerations on account of his numerous debts yet unliquidated, and'—and so forth," resumed Mr. Gore, laying down the deed; "all very good."

"It was to be expected, indeed, that these arrangements would please you, Sir," said the lawyer.

"To be sure, Sir; they do, indeed, exceedingly please me; I am even grateful, to an unbounded degree, to my affectionate and careful daughter, Selina, Lady Lumley; indeed I am. And so, the sooner I leave Dublin, with my wife and son, the better, I suppose?"

"You will yourself perceive the absolute necessity of such a step, Mr. Gore. We have all done our very best to keep your late arrest from the ears of——"

"Oh, I know, Sir; of my other 'numerous' creditors, lest detainers might drop in; I know, and again thank you all from my heart."

"But now, Mr. Gore—"

"You cannot answer for what may happen in the course of the day, and therefore I must make *my* set off instanter;—and I will, Sir; which promise, I dare say, ends our business, Sir," rising: "and now, Sir, good-day to you."

"Good-day, Mr. Gore; and I hope you are satisfied with my part in the transaction."

"My dear Sir, delighted! your conduct reflects the highest honour on your professional character, and I foretel that you have only to go on just in the same steady, respectable, clever way and—stop, Lady Lumley!" he cried, motioning her back with his arm, as, followed by Mrs. Blake, she walked towards the door; the sisters, in evident alarm, stood still;—"in the same steady, clever way, Sir, and mine will not be the only father's heart you must assist in breaking; mine not the only family that, for your six-and-eightpence, you must succeed in confirming in warfare against each other—"

"What, Mr. Gore!" interrupted the attorney.

"Begone, rascal!" thundered Mr. Gore, as he dashed the door in his face. Then he suddenly turned round, and thrusting his hand into his bosom, confronted his daughters.

For more than a minute he stood before them in silence, his face livid, his eyes rolling, his teeth set, his frame shaking, and gradually increasing in its tremor, until he staggered, and almost reeled.

"Monsters!" at last said this domestic Lear, "I cannot call ye women, much less daughters! For the last four or five miserable years, ye have seen me willingly buffet a sea of difficulties and humiliations, merely to keep up the show of a station in society from which ye might step to the rank and affluence ye now hold,—and the very ruin I dared for your sakes, ye at lasleave me to deal with as I may. But to you, Selina Lumley, to you I would particularly speak. Your cold-hearted sister made me no promise; you did. You did, and you deliberately break it. Listen to me then. May all the promises which have ever been made, and which ever may be made, to you, be broken to you, as you break that. May every tongue lie to you, every heart be hollow to you. May all the promises of the pride of your own hard and haughty heart prove false to you. You hope for a future of earthly triumph in the world; may it turn into poverty as literal as mine; into shame

and suffering more abject, and more friendless. Oh, *that* I pray for you, indeed, and in that curse, inhuman daughter, I curse you! From smiling eyes, from honied flatterers, from seeming friends, but above all,—if, indeed, your age-stricken, debauch-worn partner is doomed to be a father,—above all, from children, from the children of your bosom, may you meet a requital for this falseness to me!—God of nature and of justice, hear my prayer!"

She turned her back and rang the bell, calling out at the same time, "Sir John Lumley!"

"Ay, Sir John Lumley!" echoed her father, opening the door, and holding it in his hand—"And here he comes,—and your mother too. She wishes you to lead her out, Sir John; her carriage waits, no doubt; do take her hand—and while her father flies like a felon to hide his head in a strange country—at her command—expatriated, outlawed by her—let her pass her bridal-day, and her sweet honeymoon, as sweetly and as tranquilly, or as riotously, as her heart can wish. Pillowed on your bosom, Sir John, and lulled by the recollection of her father and her mother struggling in poverty, and of her

father's curse mounting up for her to God—let her be very happy."

"What!" cried Mrs. Gore; "must we leave our house?"

"We must; this instant, too—you, our son, and I—so they order it, my love. Put on your warmest things; 'tis a sharp day."

"Mother, farewell," said Lady Lumley, as she passed her, leaning on Sir John: Mrs. Blake had already gone out with her husband and entered her carriage. Mrs. Gore averted her head, and rushed by her daughter up-stairs, making no answer to her adieus. The bride continued her way through the hall. Her father, now sitting stunned in a chair, heard her carriage drive off.

Mr. Frederick Augustus Gore entered the room where he was, and, unobserved by him, looked over the deed which lay on the table, and put it into his pocket, together with the draft for two hundred pounds, and the bank-note for one hundred, which were beside it.

"Have all our bridal party gone away, Frederick?" asked Mr. Gore, after a pause.

"All, except young Blount, and he seems to

have something to say to you, Sir: he saw Maria before her departure——"

"And Maria, too, has left us?" interrupted Mr. Gore—"she took me at my word?"

"He saw her, father, and, I believe, received a message for you."

"And you are sure that every other guest has quitted the house?"

"Except me," said Miss Flint, appearing—"and you know I never was the person to forsake a friend in distress."

"Begone, idle gossip!"—Mr. Gore stamped passionately.

"Oh, if you *will* snap at one in such a way," answered Miss Flint, rapidly hurrying to the hall-door, which was open—"think of this!" she continued, and they heard her pattering off on her clogs.

A hackney-coach drew up to the door. Mr. Gore rose hastily.

"Come, Frederic," he said, "where is your mother?"

Mrs. Gore re appeared, dressed for a journey. He offered her his arm, and, followed by their son, led her into the hall. The servants grouped with the keepers, who had come in

upon the execution, but who, till this moment, were contented to stay out of sight, in a remote and obscure part of the house, appeared standing on the stairs. Mr. Gore bent his head, and increased his speed.

Mr. Blount, father," said his son, behind him.

" Where is he? I forgot."

Gerald presented himself at the door of the breakfast-parlour, and in a disturbed and sympathising voice, prayed to say one word with Mr. Gore.

" Lead your mother to the carriage—the hackney-coach, I mean, Frederic," said Mr. Gore, and, while his commands were obeyed, he stepped into the room with Gerald.

" I will not say a word about your situation, Mr. Gore; 'tis too dreadful to speak of; but your daughter, Maria, has charged me with a message to you."

" Well, Mr. Blount."

" Her first duty, she says, will be to acquaint her husband with your afflictions; and she confidently promises that you shall receive, in consequence, a letter from himself, of which the signature will not displease you, nor the purport seem ungenerous. Meantime, she parts from

you in love and sorrow, only, and humbly begs that you will accept of this,—" presenting him with a pocket-book—" her husband's first gift to her, until both shall have an opportunity, by learning your address, of more properly showing their dutiful feelings."

" Why, here are three hundred pounds," said Mr. Gore; " do you know where she has gone, Mr. Blount?"

" No, Sir; your daughter did not inform me."

" But she went all alone?"

" Not alone, Sir," answered Gerald, looking peculiarly disturbed; " a lady came to take her from your door."

" A lady? that 's strange. Well, God bless poor Maria. I was too hasty with her. She was the best of them, after all. Mr. Blount, I thank you for this kindness, and for much more that went before it. And as soon as I can sit down to write to you, though Heaven knows *when* that will be, or *where*, you shall receive my address, in care for her. Now, farewell. We must not stop talking here in this house,—this desolate house. Come. But stop; I will be just to you, as well as thankful. These

three hundred pounds nearly cover an old debt—"

"Mr. Gore, Mr. Gore," said Gerald, with much energy, "do not so afflict me; do not suppose me capable of—put them up, Sir, put them up; things will all come right again, some day; and then, you know—pray, Sir, put them up!"

Mr. Gore, who had not wept that morning at all his domestic trials, now burst into tears, as he grasped Gerald's hands.

"Come, Sir, Mrs. Gore waits," continued Gerald, offering his arm. His unfortunate friend allowed him to walk him out into the hall. Upon the steps, leading down to the street, Mr. Gore looked back, and made signs of adieu to one or two servants. His eye then caught the brass-plate which bore his name upon the hall-door. He sprang back into the hall, went behind the door, unscrewed the plate, snatched it off, thrust it into his pocket, and after again shaking hands with Gerald, stepped into the hackney-coach, and was driven with his wife and son out of Dublin.

CHAPTER IV.

After Mr. Gore and his two daughters had returned from the breakfast-parlour, Gerald sat among the remainder of the bridal party, still much stunned with the effects of the recent scene. When his presence of mind began to rally, it only made his situation more uncomfortable, by representing him to himself as the direct cause of all the vehemence he had witnessed, and now as the object to be stared at, and perhaps frowned at and hated, amid the family whose festive day he was unfortunate enough to overcloud in such a manner. The reflection that the people thus at his mercy in their joys and sorrows, were almost strangers to him, added peculiar impatience to Gerald's mood; and following up the retrospect hereby presented, he could do little less than denounce his ill-starred arrival in Ireland, the

accursed stage-coach and babbling driver, to which and to whom he jointly attributed the breaking of his arm, that had first detained him in the country; the trifler Flood, the needy, wretched, Irish Mr. Gore, and the coqueting, hoaxing, and also very Irish beauty, by whose combined endeavours he had been seduced into a continued sojourn in Dublin, even after he could have escaped from it. As to Mr. Augustus Frederic, and the wine-bibbing night he caused Gerald to spend, and the hundred pounds it incidentally cost him, and the degrading errors it plunged him into—above all, the monstrous one of charging his watchful fellow-reveller with the love-message which brought down upon his head the thunder-clap of this morning—bah!—he had not words nor patience to embody his utter aversion and disgust of the whole finished masterpiece of Hibernian character, manner, and adventure.

Oppressed by the double anxiety of escaping from the presence of the mad family, and from Ireland altogether, Gerald now only sat debating whether he would go through the martyrdom of taking leave of Mrs. Gore, and the friends who surrounded her, and depute his

parting respects to the bride of the morning, and to her father, or get up at once, and, unnoticed if he could, run out of the house. Strong as was his sense of politeness, it barely enabled him to decline the latter course; and well as he prepared himself for the odious scene, he proved barely able to go through with it.

When Mr. Frederic Augustus, smiling pathetically, held out an eager hand, in answer to his grave bow, he could scarce keep his brow or his tongue quiet, and finally, he almost rushed through the door at Miss Flint's sudden approach, and her——"Oh, Mr. Blount, you poor fellow!"

"'Tis done, however," said Gerald, gaining the hall.

A female servant tripped down-stairs, making a sign, gained his side, looking about her cautiously, and put into his hand a slip of paper, on which were pencilled these words:

"For goodness' sake, and for charity's sake, come up to the drawing-room to me, and take charge of my parting message to my father: it is absolutely necessary that he should receive it, and you are the only person under this roof to whom it can well be confided. Maria——."

Pity, mingled with remorse for his recent unqualified censure of a being so very peculiarly situated, and perhaps flattered vanity at the confidence placed in him, assailed Gerald's heart, and he unhesitatingly obeyed the summons of the note.

Its writer stood cloaked and bonneted in the middle of the room. She had been weeping, but, it would seem, tried to dry up her tears and compose herself at his approach. The pocket-book, afterwards presented by Gerald to Mr. Gore, was in her hand. With apologies for the trouble she put him to, the afflicted young lady then delivered her message. Gerald received it seriously and respectfully, and engaged to convey it to her father.

"And now, Mr. Blount," she continued, "accept my sincere apologies for much greater inconvenience which I have helped to cause you. In good-humoured lightness of heart, unconscious of the hidden misery around me, and, be assured, not meaning or wishing to obtrude myself on your interest, I certainly became a party to a little plot against you. But we must not say farewell to each other till I at least remove a delusion which I directly, though not by direct

words or actions, assisted in promoting. Indeed, I should think you scarce require, at present, to be undeceived in the silly matter I allude to. I see a peculiar meaning in the studious regards with which you honour me. After your second vision, at the theatre, the night before the last, of the real object of your interest, your wavering notions of identity become more fixed, and it is hardly necessary for me, though highly complimented by being generally called somewhat like that charming lady, to inform you, that you and I never met till my father presented you at the carriage-door in Sackville-street; never met in Paris, or on the French coast, or on the Irish coast."

She correctly divined Gerald's thoughts. Hardly, indeed, did he now require her assurance. If the face he had seen in the theatre was unlike Maria Gore's, Maria Gore's at present was unlike it; and Gerald admitted that he was quite undeceived, adding how much he wondered at himself for allowing his mind to entertain the mistake.

"Do not be too severe on your own mental capacities," she resumed; "you at first admitted

it with difficulty, and at no time really entertained it. And your doubt sometimes occurs: I have myself experienced something of the kind. Last year I met once or twice, in England, a gentleman, who was regularly introduced to me, and whom I often heard speak. Returning to Ireland, I became acquainted with another gentleman, just sufficiently like the former to make me observe the similitude at the first look. We grew to be intimate acquaintances, and day after day his points of resemblance to my English friend seemed stronger; the differences between their features, person, voice, and manner, melted away; I often caught myself confounding the one with the other; and it was but lately that their accidental contact, side by side, here in Ireland, enabled me to correct the error of my memory. Observe, this happened with the certainty to my hand, if I had used it, of two distinct individuals. But, as in your case, had I only casually seen the first gentleman, and lost sight of him without knowing his name, and then became acquainted with the second, and experienced from him a judicious attempt to

make me think he was that first, beyond doubt I must have yielded, at least as far as you did, to the delusion."

"But why was I marked out for such cruel tantalizing?" asked Gerald, gently and good-humouredly.

"Blame me for the first part of it, Mr. Blount, and me alone, though others must share your censure for the continuance of the jest. I knew of your first interview with my original and masterpiece, almost as soon as it had occurred. This made me look curiously at you the moment my poor father brought you to the carriage. When, in return, you fixed your regards on me, and particularly when you spoke about Père la Chaise, I recollected of whom it was supposed I was such a bad copy; and, merely for the sake of having a laugh upon paper with your dear, dear sister, Lady Augusta, took it into my giddy head to humour your doubt; so far as, without false words or indelicacy, I might do so. In reply to my letter of that evening, Augusta highly enjoyed your dilemma, and urged me to keep you in it. Previously, I had engaged another in the plot."

"The arch-traitor, Flood?" asked Gerald.

"Yes; your old and sincere friend, Captain Flood," answered the young lady, slightly colouring.

"I am bound to think," continued Gerald, "that Augusta really gave you instructions, by letter, to call on me to explain why I declined the visit of Mr. Knightly, and that eldest son he has got?"

"Certainly."

"And why I never answered a letter from them which I never saw?"

"That, too. Augusta, angry with your supposed offences, and with your neglect of her letter, would not ask these questions of you, herself; preferring to have me propose them, if I should meet you here, where she presumed you must be visible; I had her wishes to that effect before I saw you."

"And you seemed angry with me, yourself, because I would make no apology to your friend?"

"Yes, on her account, and because sharing her conviction that you were aware of facts which would have made your conduct, at the time, exceedingly unamiable."

"My conduct, how?"

"Towards the Knightlies, to be sure; but before your sudden escape that night from this drawing-room, I discovered that we had both wronged you; that you were not possessed of the facts necessary to shape your conduct; and, at the same time, I also saw new facilities for surrounding you with increased mystery, still assisted by your sister and others."

"And you advised her accordingly?"

"Early next morning."

"Well, and now I throw myself upon you for a solution of this fresh puzzle."

"Indeed, Mr. Blount, my heart and my spirits are far from prompting me, in my present situation, to continue any piece of fooling with you; yet I fear that I am not at liberty to extricate you from your difficulties. Dear Augusta has bound me by a solemn promise to keep you ignorant of what we all mean,—until you repair to Lower-Court."

"Oh, I thank Augusta very much. But Flood can and must resolve me; I'll set off to him."

"I venture to promise you a journey for nothing; unless, indeed, you take your old class-

mate, as I am sure you will not take him ; particularly when you recollect that he but faithfully keeps a lady's secret."

" Which I am sure he can do," said Gerald, venturing a slightly expressive look at Flood's advocate, and again his companion seemed a little disconcerted, while he continued half bitterly, half in jest ; " No matter then : I remember, that another person was indignant at my want of admiration for those worshipful, all-pervading Knightlies ; ay, and pointed out my lack of heart because I would not fall down to them : of course, she—for I speak of a lady—meant, like you and Augusta, that I knew the ' certain facts,' which now it seems I did not know, and do not know, and cannot know, unless I repair to Lower-Court : but I must and will, without any such alternative ; 'tis but seeking out the lady in question, who abhors secrets as much as others love them ; yes, Miss Flint ! to you I go."

" And would it not be as well if, indulging your charming sister in her little harmless plot against you, Mr. Blount, you just accepted her affectionate invitation to the country ?" asked the young lady, in a continued gravity, which

Gerald, by his gradual assumption of badinage that he did not feel, had hitherto vainly endeavoured to divert.

"Well, and if I am fairly answered one other simple question, I may begin to prepare my mind for much of female despotism."

"I believe I anticipate you, but can afford no hopes; your question, however?"

"Who *is* my Genius, at last?"

"No: I foresaw it; that question, of all others, I am not permitted to meet; but I *can* add, that your sister will personally resolve *it* also."

"Just say if she is French, or English, or Irish?"

"Pray, Mr. Blount, do not press me upon a subject which, every thing else apart, ill accords with my predicament this moment."

"Only this, then—and answer me if you can—I *did* see her on the shingles?"

"You did."

"And to her I owe my accommodation of that night?"

"To her."

"And she penned the note I found in the cabin?"

"No: but farther on this point I must be silent."

"But it was she, not you, I saw the night before the last?"

"I was in the theatre that night, but me you did not see. Farewell, Mr. Blount; the carriage that bears me from this house—and from my family—draws up near the door;"—Gerald had, indeed, noticed that a grave-looking carriage just then stood still in the train of Sir John Lumley's and Mr. Blake's.

"I have certainly seemed forgetful of your individual feelings, by my questions, and, perhaps, particularly so by my manner of putting them; yet, believe me," said Gerald, changing his tone and manner, "not so really forgetful on the subject *as I wished* to seem; and now do not deem it merely impertinent, in a very sincere, if not very old friend, if he hopes, with all his heart that your immediate protectors are in all respects what you would wish them to be."

"Oh, indeed, indeed they are:—see!—quickly answering my hasty message, sent just before you came up-stairs—one of them appears this moment on the carriage-step;—thanks, dear,

dear girl!" continued Maria, kissing her hand, while she again wept, to the friend she spoke of; —"No, my love! do not venture in!"—her visitor was tripping up to the hall-door—"but the spirited creature *will* come to me—she has not caught my signals."

"Farewell, then!" said Gerald: Maria presented her hand—"happiness to you; and permit a last word upon my own affairs: I do not now require Augusta's help to guess the name of your double; every thing at last convinces me that I have been haunted by her manager-in-chief, Miss Knightly."

"Well, well, that is to be decided;" a light foot came up-stairs,—"stop a moment, yet:—ah, dear girl!" as a young lady bounded into the room; and the friends warmly embraced. The new-comer was not beautiful, but her figure was good, her stature imposing, and her quick blue eyes, and high, country colour, rendered her striking. She wore a riding-habit and a man's hat, and held a whip in her hand.

"Come," she said, after their embrace, "come with me out of this churlish house; I was just mounting little Cathleen, to have one

good canter round the Phœnix, before leaving Dublin for the delightful hills and fields, but your note made me send her back to her manger, and order the carriage to take me to you:—so, come, I say, and now no cantering, and no Phœnix, but out of this dull town instantly."

Gerald had not a high opinion of the "spirited creature," upon whose protection Maria had thrown herself; she half seemed an Irish fox-huntress.

"Do you catch the likeness?" asked Maria, in a low voice, suddenly approaching him.

"Where? what do you mean?—to you? in this lady? Yes; you are tall, and have blue eyes in common; but that 's all."

"I must present you, though your introductory and your parting-bow are destined to be made together: first, farewell, again!—come, my dear," she took her friend's arm and was passing out, when both stopped on the threshold —"but I am guilty of an omission; this gentleman and you ought to be acquainted—so, Mr. Blount, Miss Knightly."

Miss Knightly bowed low, smiling very tormentingly; the next instant she and her companion turned down-stairs, and before Gerald

" was himself again," they had entered the carriage, and were driven quickly from the house.

" What ! she ! she, my Ariel ! she, my very dream of grace and beauty !—No ; I erred indeed ; and thank Heaven I did ; thank Heaven 'tis no Knightly. Ay ; as her friend evidently meant, my conjecture was soon to be decided, indeed. But lo ! the prime minister, and prime befooler of my rational sister, Lady Augusta Blount ; and my early competitor in donkey equestrianism. Yes ; the bold, forward child, Miss Rhoda, matured into this sun-burnt, weather-rouged, rustic Amazon,—or, if it must be so, this ' spirited creature.'

" What is to be done with Augusta ? And who can my guardian-angel be, after all ?—I 'll go down amongst the people in the parlour, again, horrid as is the enterprize, just to see if Miss Flint knows ; and to be sure she does—" here Gerald erred—" or at all events, she can explain the other foolish riddle about the ' certain facts.' " Accordingly he was on his way to the parlour, when Mr. Gore's voice, loudly echoing his daughter Selina's call for Sir John Lumley, arrested his steps ; and the rapid oc-

currences which followed, completely put Miss Flint out of his head.

We have seen him deliver Maria's message to her father. After Mr. Gore's departure from the house, Gerald, much depressed by the last sad scene he had witnessed, walked for some time about the streets, in a vague and melancholy mood. 'Tis unnecessary to say if his own concerns partially engaged him. The reader will solve the question when he is informed that Gerald bent his steps, about four o'clock, to the houses of some common acquaintances of his and of Miss Flint, hoping to learn that lady's address. But those acquaintances, though amongst her most intimate ones, after successively pausing, and saying, " Let us see," as if it was quite a new question to them, declared that they really did not know where, in Dublin, Miss Flint lived; it was very strange, seeing her so often, and, indeed, for so many years; but they really did not. And, in fact, Gerald's inquiries proved fruitless.

The next situation he appears in, is purchasing a map of the county in which Lower-Court is to be found. We then follow him to the office of the night-coach that is to start at

eight o'clock in the evening, and pass, at about five, next morning, within a few miles of his sister's residence. And here Gerald engaged his seat, and then repaired to his hotel to study his map. Now he ascertained from the scale, that the by-road, leading off the high-road to Lower-Court, measured only three miles; so that, after leaving the coach at its angle, he could walk on, and surprise Augusta with an early visit. Besides, a village marked very respectably on the map, was to be met half-way; and if the morning proved bad, or the by-road difficult, though, again, the map made a different promise, perhaps he could there get a post-chaise, and pursue and conclude his short journey in a comfortable manner. He gained some perhaps as necessary information. From Lower-Court, the by-road, now turning, and running parallel to the coach-road, continued, for about two miles, to the house occupied by Lord Clangore's English agent, and then passed one in which, as Gerald concluded, dwelt his Scotch steward, Mr. Bignel.

Gerald had made a bad breakfast; now he made as bad a dinner; that sensation known to all, though perhaps few can define it, the sensation

of going away (if the indication shall be understood), spoiled his appetite. It was great relief to him when the time arrived for proceeding to the coach-office.

He found himself the only inside passenger, at starting. At a house in the outskirts of Dublin, the coach stopped, however, to supply him with a fellow-traveller. A burly, elderly, but respectable-looking man, came out of the hall-door, great-coated, and handkerchiefed almost up to the eyes. He was attended by servants male and female, who carried various small packages, besides a trunk and a bag, and followed by another gentleman, and by a lady, and by masters and misses of different ages. It appeared that Gerald's future acquaintance had been dining, and waiting for the coach, at this house, and that now, his host and hostess, and their equally hospitable progeny, flocked to their threshold, to wish him good bye and a safe journey. Many were the adieus, indeed, given and received; many were the "best loves," and the "best regards," with which the traveller was freighted by old and young, to his own family, who, reckoning the names mentioned, would seem to outnumber even

their town friends. Then he got into the coach, and received at the door, and stowed away on both the seats, and under the seats, and in the pockets, his dozen little packages, which might be made up of sundry nic-nacs ordered by his wife, or sued for by his children, and, through forgetfulness or hurry, not purchased till his seat had been taken, and his trunk and bag crammed almost to bursting without them. The coach had proceeded a good way from his friend's house before the careful gentleman finished arranging them all to his satisfaction; and at last saying to Gerald, "Your servant, Sir," he lolled back in his corner, and settled his head for going asleep.

Gerald wished that he could study the features of his coach-companion, who seemed to promise a display, should the opportunity turn up, of original Irish character. But his handkerchiefs, and his broad-brimmed, pressed-down hat, had quite hid the gentleman's face while the blaze at his friend's hall-door might have revealed it; and now the scantily-lighted outlet through which they continued to pass, left them in almost total darkness. Gerald then

wished the gentleman would speak, instead of setting in for a sleep, which, from the tranquil and matter-of-course preparations for it, might very probably last till morning. And perhaps it would have done so, had not the coach suddenly and violently jolted over an inequality in the suburb street, and caused the elder to waver towards the other corner, as he said—"No use, I see, on this pavement; I must wait till we are rolling over the road, in earnest."

"How like St. Giles's," remarked Gerald, looking out through the window, and willing to provoke his fellow-traveller into farther discourse: "that is, so far as the scattered dull lamps will let me see."

"You'd admit a full likeness, in broad daylight, Sir," assented his companion.

"With sorrow, if I was an Irishman," resumed Gerald.

"As so you ought," said the gentleman.

"It *is* an Irishman I hear admit so much?"

"To the heart, Sir."

"And you really do not patronize the economy of that London-Irish settlement, Sir?"

"I would be one of a conspiracy to set fire to it," answered his new acquaintance.

"With the hope of improving it, Sir?" smiled Gerald.

"No, Sir; Irish though I am, you have not caught a bull by the horns so soon."

"In what view, then?"

"In a good many. First, to rid myself of a living subject for every-day taunt from Englishmen, who perhaps are too hasty in considering it as such, after all; next, to force my cockneyfied fellow-countrymen and fellow-countrywomen to seek out some less abominable hot-bed of vice and demoralization; next,—but I hope these two reasons are enough, Sir."

"But is it *not* a living and most eminent subject for the remarks you allude to?" urged Gerald.

"Before I answer you, Sir, I put in my national claim to ask you a few questions of my own. You can tell me, I suppose, why the streets of St. Giles's are permitted to remain in a litter? why those, whose duty it is to see all the other streets of London visited by the scavengers' cart, leave those to their fate? I hope you can also inform me how many Eng-

lish—how many London teachers of the worst and lowest London vice, have establishments among the Milesians of St. Giles's, instructing them, as, at their successive, and indeed first arrivals from Ireland, they did instruct them—to graft much of their present conduct upon the primitive habits imported from their native villages or wilds? Next, Sir, no doubt you are prepared to say to what degree the avoiding antipathies of the more respectable of the lower order of Londoners may, or may not, have produced the necessity that keeps those poor people clanning together, deprived of immediate example for improvement? and next, you will surely tell me why the law of England directly encourages them in the very worst kind of immorality?"

"What law of England?"

"That, according to which a marriage between Catholic and Catholic, in England, if celebrated by a Catholic clergyman, is proclaimed null and void, Sir."

"And there is such a one, Sir?"

"Why, yes: here, in Ireland, a Catholic priest is recognized by the statute as a legal agent in marrying two of his own flock; he is

only guilty of felony when he marries two of different persuasions; but in England his ministry is not at all permitted. A well-schooled London-Irish hod-carrier, who has 'gone to the priest,' as they call it, with some unsuspecting fresh-faced girl of his country, just come over, can turn her adrift at his pleasure. I have seen many instances of the kind; the Roman Catholic clergymen of the rankling metropolis can supply you with more; and the police offices, and the records of infamy and misery, with more still. But, after all this explanation, you have yet to answer my Irish questions, Sir."

"Suppose I am not able," said Gerald.

"See there, then," remarked the gentleman, again about to make himself comfortable in the corner. But another jolt—it was the third or fourth—seemed to exhort him to continue.

"After all, I am not ashamed of my slovenly compatriots of St. Giles's, in one respect. They are many thousands; friends of theirs about Chelsea, and other outskirts of London, are thousands more; and yet few of them appear, from time to time, before your sitting magistrates, charged with their proportionate share of the different crimes which are com-

mitted in your Babylon—Lord Liverpool has remarked as much—and with the blackest of its crimes they, thank God! never stand charged, either there, or here:—why? because they are absolutely ignorant of its nature, here; and have no name in their language for it; and Peel admitted that."

"But it would be a blunder, indeed, if they have no name for the rows and the uproars, in London, which disgrace them and their country, and shock the English people."

"Again, I beg to put by your new point, till I give way to a little more Irish egotism about my countrymen in your capital. Apart from St. Giles's, and its very humble community, I am still less ashamed of specimens of a higher class, whom we constantly send over to you. For example:—some of the editors, and sub-editors, of your daily press, a majority of its reporters, and a good many of the contributors to your periodicals, are Irishmen, mostly real Pats—I mean Papists, as you call them. And not now considering the perfection to which they have brought their reporting profession, and the great respectability they have thereby conferred upon it, nor the talent they show in the other depart-

ments mentioned—not now debating these points, because we do not want them, I would invite you to recollect, for a moment, the sterling moral and social habits and principles, which alone could have enabled this numerous class of Irishmen to make themselves useful amid the jostling competition of London, and to this day keep their private character untouched by public odium, or even by public inquiry of any kind."

"All very fair," Gerald said; but he pressed his query about the fighting in St. Giles's.

"Ay, just as they go on here, at fairs, and every where else; I admit all that—won't defend a bit of it; and yet, Sir, to your surprise, don't care one little harmless blow of a shillelagh about it. 'Tis very wrong, to be sure, but as incidental to the neglected state of society in which they first acquired it, as prancing is to a half-broke colt. In an improved position of Ireland, it will wear down; ay, in her very next generation, please God;—and so long as it continues, I thank the stars of my country that there is nothing unmanly in it; and that it is not pugilism either—no doubt you stare, Sir, if I could see your face, but I am quite in earnest—I hope that cold-blooded prize-fight-

ing may never become a national sport, as you define it, in Ireland; may never take place of even our pate-breaking cudgel-play, which has the merit of a cause for contention, if it has no other."

"Or an imaginary cause," observed Gerald.

"Or an imaginary cause," assented the Irishman; "it does as well for my point; our combatants may set to work under a delusion, in some cases; still they are really vexed with each other; their blood is up; they do not shake hands to admit mutual and perfect good will, and then pound one another into jelly, or kill one another for a wager;—ay, kill; for the yearly deaths by pugilism in England, are a set off to those by the shillelagh in Ireland."

"I am delighted to find a gentleman so truly national," smiled Gerald; "you will not admit a single point against your green Ireland."

"Not a single one,—to an Englishman determined that I should, Sir," replied his companion good-humouredly.

"Come, I compel you to one: you have agreed with me that the likeness was strong between St. Giles's and the outlet of your

metropolis, which we just now cleared—why does it exist?"

"That outlet," answered the gentleman, in a low, impressive voice, "once formed part of an extensive, comfortable, and neat district, occupied by people who derived their means for keeping it so, from their manufacture of articles, which a certain political measure put an end to the demand for."

"What political measure, Sir?"

"The atrocious act of Legislative Union, Sir."

The adoring girl, who is told that her idol is a demon, would scarce feel more shocked, and, indeed, indignant, than did Gerald at this bold censure upon a measure which he had always regarded as the result of the greatest state-wisdom, and as pregnant with incalculable blessings to Ireland. It had been his father's pride, as well as the stepping-stone to his success in life; it was the highest feather in the cap of the distinguished minister, Gerald's guardian, friend, and official principal. His brother took it up and identified himself with its spirit, and its workings. None of Gerald's political friends had ever impugned it.

To be now abruptly, and perhaps rudely, told that it was an "atrocious act," offended, and vexed him sorely. After an expressive pause, during which he looked hard at the companion whose face he could not see — "Good-night, Sir," he said, and he fell back, in his corner.

"A very good-night, Sir, and a pleasant nap," returned his polite companion; "and you are quite right, for here go our wheels over the smooth road at last."

CHAPTER V.

But Gerald was nothing the better of the kind wishes expressed in his regard. He did not sleep. The passing outrage upon his political creed at first kept him restless. "Yes," he argued, "I have before me, at last, a specimen of a real Irish declaimer, Milesian, Papist, and with a great O to his name. Here is one of the overweening nationalists that, by decrying every thing English, and blindly worshipping every thing Irish, keep this country from the great assimilation with her superior, which can alone ensure her respectability and happiness." And Gerald went on to re-arrange his former opinions on the subject, which recent events had put out of their places; and, a little in spite to his fellow-traveller, he resolved anew to hold firmly by them all. Nay, he even wished to torment and overpower him with

them, if, indeed, the old gentleman would awaken out of his second sleep, and give the opportunity by talking politics again. That sleep seemed, however, a hopeless one for Gerald's view. Nothing could break it up; neither the horn of the guard, summoning ghastly-looking creatures, in successive villages, to be ready with fresh horses, or to receive their mail-bags from Dublin; nor the change of noise that occurred, when the coach suddenly clattered off the smooth road upon the pavement of a street; nor yet the change from going fast, and being shaken violently, to a stand-still at the window of a village post-office, although sudden rest and quietness, when one sleeps amid the motion and rumble of a carriage is as great an interruption to repose, as is a sudden uproar when one sleeps in one's motionless and silence-curtained bed.

In fact, hours wore away, and Gerald heard nothing from his companion, except a snore, that often strove for predominance with the horses' hoofs and the coach-wheels.

During this pause, Gerald's momentary vexation gradually wore away in recurrences to his more immediate and important affairs, and he

soon cared little whether or not the declamatory Irishman woke up till the end of his journey. Just at this moment of indifference to the event, it occurred, however, exactly as more considerable events happen in life when we least expect them, and after we have tired ourselves waiting for them. Though Gerald could not distinctly see his movements in the thrice-dark night, the gentleman seemed to shiver a little, as if he had got chilled; and then it farther appeared that he snatched off his hat, and replaced it by a white night-cap, dimly hinted to Gerald's eye amid the surrounding gloom. Having made these improvements in personal comforts, he shrugged himself into his corner again; but suddenly bent forward with another slight shudder, and quite pulled up the hitherto half raised glass.

Gerald thought this unceremonious, and indeed so expressed himself. "You will excuse me, Sir, but I am hot, and half-suffocated;" and he proceeded to let down the glass to its former position.

"And I am cold, and half-frozen," said the assiduous sleeper: "so, what are we to do?"

Gerald was conciliated by the tone and words

with which his briskness was met, and going halves with his own ill-humour and the occasion, replied, "If your cloak does not keep you warm enough, you can have mine, Sir."

"But not put up the glass? Well, young gentleman, I give way, though, were it daylight, you would call me your senior by nearly thrice the number of years you have yet lived."

"And were it daylight, Sir, you would see that I am an invalid, lately escaped from very trying illness and sufferings, and not worth contending the point with."

"Indeed?" questioned the other, stooping over and trying to peer into his features, perhaps for an illustration of Gerald's avowal—"I am very sorry, Sir, that I should have raised the trifling question—in reality 'tis of no import to me—I am in sturdy health, thank God!—and have been so as long as I can remember,—and as indifferent as Marcus Brutus to the 'idle wind' —so, never mind me, but take care of yourself, by all means. Don't you think you ought to use your cloak yourself? The night air may hurt you more than the closeness of our atmosphere, if the glass were down, could annoy you."

Peace was now made; once more they chatted freely together; and the elderly gentleman became amusing, as if he thought "to sleep no more," and make an effort for his invalid and sleepless companion. His tone, to Gerald's surprise, changed even into more kindness than his admissions of ill health warranted: nay, into a respectfulness, or, at least, a considerateness, for which he could not at all account. Meantime *his* respect for his accidental associate also increased, keeping pace with the good feeling called up by the stranger's attentions and manner, and he endeavoured to make himself responsively amiable. A score of different topics were exhausted, before they a second time disagreed, and then (Heaven knows by what byways they arrived at it) their stumble was over the theory that Gerald had so much at heart. Thus they immediately approached it.

"Yes," (Gerald speaks,) "I am, indeed, as sorry as you or any Irishman can be, that your great question has again failed:" alluding to a recent vote in the House of Lords:—"for I consider it the first step to be taken towards a result which would ensure the future happiness and success of your country," and he stated his

favourite plan of perfect assimilation between the two islands.

The stranger remained silent some time, and then said,—"Well; and it would be my first plan, too, to have us all made English-Irish."

There was a subdued something about the expression of the words, totally different from the speaker's former mode of delivering himself, which struck one of the thousand hidden or forgotten strings of associated thought, and made Gerald's mind start. He surely had heard that voice saying those words before, but where, or when, was a question; and it engaged him until his companion continued, very tranquilly, and perhaps somewhat sneeringly, only that the sneer was good-naturedly, or else cleverly kept down—

"That is, Sir, it would be my first plan for curing all our evils,—if I saw any chance of its success; if it had not failed already; failed a hundred times, during the last seven hundred years, and upwards; failed with all possible appliances to speed it on, such as it cannot now muster; failed with attempts at extermination by fire and sword, by chicanery and intrigue, by famine and pestilence; failed with attempts at colonization, even by Scotch experimentalists; failed with

attempts at proselytism by "drum ecclesiastic," by the kidnapping, demoralizing, odious system of charter-schools, by burning mass-houses, by priest-hunting, and by laws passed amid assenting cheers, that might have found an echo in Pandemonium; failed altogether, and at each failure more decidedly than at each previous one. And, as such is *the fact*, I give up the old plan for a new plan."

"What is it?" asked Gerald.

"One by which every other country has got on, that ever *has* got on. One, by which alone mighty England has got on, and *could* have got on, though she is not in the habit of recommending it to our adoption. One, you may anticipate, very little like yours—the unsuccessful experiment of eight hundred years. In fact, Sir, since we plainly see that Ireland *cannot* be made English, suppose we just allow her to make herself what she is every day becoming in spite of us—Irish?"

"What she is every day becoming?" echoed Gerald.

"Precisely, Sir: at this moment, she is more Irish than she was a fortnight after the visit of the heartless, hoaxing, eye-poking-out and limb-

chopping Norman; to say nothing of any later period of her history. The sojourning strangers in her soil, those who openly call themselves so, are numerically less, opposed to her real people, than were, in proportion, the few needy adventurers he left behind him, to the then aborigines of the country. And that people now amount to numbers fitted to form a great nation; and they are at last united, firm; talky, if you like; but still firm; reflective, and full of purpose; united by a riveting of every link of the social chain; united in religion,—or at least their fellow-countrymen who join them *in purpose*, care nothing for the difference,—and above all, Sir, they are—United Irish."

"For a struggle by arms?" asked Gerald.

"I do not say that; but I will say—for becoming a nation, free, and able to work out its own resources. This freedom includes, of course, escape from the remaining fetters of the statute-book, but by no means can be limited to that single advantage. And this freedom, I repeat, Ireland will arrive at, in spite of us all. In spite of herself; she cannot help it. When once a country has come to a certain step, she must go farther; there is a moral necessity—a necessity

sown in the elements of human nature, then manifesting itself—that she should. Every country that ever gained that certain step, has done so; Ireland has gained it, and she must do so."

"And now, your certain step," said Gerald, almost stunned, if nothing else, at the boldness of this doctrine.

"Consciousness of moral power, Sir," answered his lecturer; "consciousness of moral power, derived from education amongst the higher and middle classes, and by their communings with, and their example to, the lower classes; by increase in wealth, and by fame in liberal professions and pursuits, the result of that education; by successful rivalry in wealth and talent with those who would keep her down; and I must not omit, although I still call it up in a moral view, by comparing themselves and their country with their antagonists, and with other countries,—ay, and by comparing numbers with numbers."

"And if not by a warlike *coup-de-main*," continued Gerald, "Ireland is, I suppose, to be made pure Irish by a perfect union (one even more perfect than your present one, to ensure

the result) of all her people, of every religious and political cast ?"

" It does not seem so. But no matter whether it does or not. Such a literal union is not at all necessary. The single party who absolutely cry out against the approaching crisis are as unimportant and as undistinguished in moral power—that is, in wisdom or talent, in place or in fame, as they are numerically; and they will soon grow less so than they are, and, finally, become as unnoticed in Ireland, as the few hundred thousands of Roman Catholics are in England, or *their* political (though not religious) *pendants*, the Huguenots in France. Some of our anti-Irish threaten to leave us, in the very first stage of our progress towards nationality. If they keep their word, so much the better; if they do not, again, I say, no matter. Whether they go or stay, their national existence will be destroyed; I do not mean by any specific means of annihilation directed to them, but as a matter of course, according to the nature of things; necessarily, of itself."

" Then, Sir, your object is to be won rather by disunion than by union ?"

"Not *by* it; because no one who seeks our object wants to work *with* it, or, indeed, wishes *for* it,—only if the party insists on it, (and they will; in fact, it is inevitable,) then our object must be won, notwithstanding that partial disunion, without caring for it, without thinking of it. Yes, indeed, Sir, you are quite right. Ireland must, at last, become a nation in the teeth of that disunion, as far as it goes; and those who made it, and who obstinately and foolishly keep it up, must abide the consequences. They have made their bed; let them lie down on it. They have spurned every opportunity of getting on along with the Irish people, when both might have gone on well together, to the end of the world; and now the Irish people will get on without them; ay, and worse than that; shake them off, and leave them behind on the course."

"Excuse my ignorance, if I admit that I do not know what political opponents you thus doom to destruction."

"To political oblivion, rather."

"Well, any term; but who are they?"

"Descendants of colonists, English and Scotch, who, to this day, in addresses presented to the throne, *call themselves* colonists, and de-

cline the name of Irishmen—these, in the first instance; next, descendants of colonists, who openly advocate or encourage anti-Irish measures of *any kind*."

"Your English-Irish, in fact," commented Gerald.

"Even so, if you like the phrase; for I certainly do mean all persons who would strive to make Ireland English; and, lastly, I mean all pretended English-Irish friends of the people, who, to carry a county, or a town, or, perhaps, with a commendable foresight towards cherishing their Irish estates, (though I pronounce them in no danger,) give a vote, now and then, upon the great wrangling question, (as you would throw a piece of bread to a hungry mastiff, or to a critic, merely to pass him by,) and afterwards zealously, though perhaps covertly, engage in one or all of the absurd schemes for provincializing Ireland: such as converting, transporting, or unhousing a million at a time of her population. Long ago, Sir, such half measures, and such half Irishmen, might have succeeded in recommending themselves to our generous credulity; but even the burnt child now teaches us a lesson."

"My good Sir," said Gerald, "you certainly have arrived, by this account, at a most sudden importance: my only wonder is, that, till within the last forty or fifty years, you never thought of taking any great steps towards it."

"Do not wonder, Sir; but, if you please, blame yourselves for the phenomenon, and admit beforehand a remarkable want of political sagacity in making us what we are; since, as is argued, you never contemplated, at the time, making us the much more that we are doomed to become in spite of you."

"Pray explain, Sir."

"Why, Sir, you had us bound hands and feet, gagged, interdicted from reading and writing, thinking and praying. Had you left us so, you would now find us so: terror, ignorance, the immorality engendered by a want of free approach to the observances and comforts of religion, and, above all, the uninterrupted influence of perfect slavery and conscious self-abasement, must have unfitted us for a struggle against you, or fitted us only for one that free 'blood-letting' (as Bacon called it, when consulted upon our symptoms, some hundred years ago,) would have got down. And since, indeed,

it has all along been your object to keep us from growing into a nation—I merely argue the thing logically—such ought to have been your part. But, with that object in view, you inconsiderately and inconsistently broke half of our shackles, ungagged us, allowed us to read and to write, to pray and to think; to make money; to stand before the world in professions; and you deemed, that by leaving the other half of the shackles still rattling about us; by barring your Universities against us, no matter how we availed ourselves of your permission to become learned and wise; by blocking up the bench to our successful lawyers; the army and navy to our brave soldiers and sailors, the senate to our aristocracy, or to our popular men; by these reservations, Sir, you calculated that still we should remain powerless and but half free. Yet surely here was a great lack of that political foresight which spans the future workings of its measure by aids from a philosophical, a common-sense calculation of the essential tendencies of man, derived from his position. The whole slave may be kept stationary, the half freedman never. And by half freeing us, you taught us to cry out for perfect freedom; nay, should

you disregard our voice, you taught us how to obtain that first blessing with our own moral energies. You ensured it to us. You opened our eyes to the past, the present, and the future. You put a light into our hands, not indeed to dispel the darkness in which we mutely and passively crouched, but certainly to make it 'visible.' You led us out of the valley of bondage, if not into the plains of freedom, certainly to a height from which, for the first time, we saw their teeming promise, each following day inhaled their fragrance, and imbibed the inevitable ambition to rush down and mingle with their favoured possessors. That, joined to your theory that we never must so rush down, was a great mistake. As well might you say to the hill-stream 'descend not,' to kindled flame 'ascend not,' to the fledged bird 'fly not,' to the budding tree 'bloom not, nor yet bear fruit.' Streams may be pent up in the low grounds for ever; flame, if never kindled, will never aspire to heaven; that bird, if you clip his wings, and keep them clipped, will never fly; that tree, if it bud not, neither will it be fruitful; but once in motion on the hill, once kindled, once feathered, once budding, the water will find its

way down, the fire will find its way up, the bird will emerge into his freedom of air, and the tree will yield its matured fruit."

"Perhaps; if not diverted aside, or quenched, or caught on the verge of the nest, or torn up by the roots," said Gerald.

"I grant you; but Ireland is no longer to be so dealt with. Fair promises or half measures can no longer 'divert' her; and the hand of physical force alone can impede her launch from the nest, or quench her, or tear her up; and this, your only available hand, you must not use, for she will not afford you the opportunity; and an unarmed people—one, at least, so near you, and before the world's eye, you will hardly endeavour to exterminate. You live too late for that."

"I am not one of those who, under any circumstances, or at any time—" began Gerald—his lecturer anxiously interrupted him.

"I do not believe—suppose you are; in that point of view I never saw your character, notwithstanding the brisk twist you just now gave to my string of metaphors. No, Sir; nor can I even believe that one-third of the people of England entertain such a hopeful scheme; are capable

of entertaining it: and hence, apart from the hazard of the attempt—for there *would* be a hazard, after all; and apart from the question of other neighbours approvingly looking on at your enterprize; and apart from the execration with which the voice of the world would greet it—hence is my confidence that England plans no exterminating crusade against us. How, then, are we to be stunted in our growth into a free and flourishing nation? Shackle us, and gag us, and so forth, again? Still more improbable. Impossible. A rebellion amongst us, from one extremity of the land to the other, would not, could not, be punished by the re-enactment of one repealed penal statute. You did not, durst not, so take vengeance for the wild insurrection of ninety-eight; and what was out of the question thirty years ago, is now more remotely out of the question. You durst not, for many of the very reasons which stand against the fire and sword policy; and for more than those. And here, I ask again, how will you stop us? Bundling up your assimilation theory, and your conversation theory, and your depopulating theory, like so much lumber; throwing

them, in the name of good sense, quite overboard; and getting things before us as they really have been, and therefore are, and must be—how—I repeat my words, over and over, for there are no better—HOW WILL YOU STOP US?"

"Oh, Sir," replied Gerald, "I make allowances for the zeal with which, as an Irishman and a Catholic, you state all this matter; but to many of your assumptions, whence flow your conclusions, I must, in the first instance, object. The aggregate national influence of all the descendants of English and Scotch in Ireland, is not so unimportant as you would represent it: in property and intelligence they outweigh the native people; and even in numbers they are formidable. You also suppose for your friends superior talent and fame; pardon me, if I have always been led to consider that in such instances, as well, indeed, as in all others which confer respectability, the English-Irish portion of your whole population had the advantage."

"You make more than one mistake, Sir, which I crave your permission distinctly to point out," resumed the gentleman.

" When I spoke of an anti-Irish party here, who were insignificant, and to be treated accordingly, I did not mean the majority of the descendants of English and Scotch, now living in Ireland; I could not mean so, for that majority, though not pure Irish in blood, are so in feeling and in national identity with the people. After you have been some time amongst us, Sir, (which I hope may be the case,) you will meet many Protestant-Irish gentlemen as zealous as I am to see Ireland free and national, although Catholic. You will find Protestant wealth, and property, and title, and education, animated by this zeal, and swelling the common cry for freedom and a country. Of course, we deduct so much of Protestant influence and respectability from your English-Irish, or anti-Irish list, and add it to our mere-Irish one. Then as to the question of the comparative intellect of the Catholic people and their Protestant abettors on the one hand, and of the headstrong party alluded to on the other, look into our literature, Sir, attend a Catholic debate in Parliament, attend our Four-Courts in Dublin, and I leave you to your own conclusions. Taking into account how lately Catholic talent has been

permitted to force itself into fame, and how uninterruptedly this handful of their sworn foes have enjoyed all the faculties for arriving at mental perfection, I am, indeed, surprised to find discrepancy upon the side where it appears so evident. But we should, however, consider, that fifty years of pushing on, freshened by novel excitement, and inspired by noble objects, is worth centuries of narrow-minded resistance, which implies standing still, and perhaps more than that—perhaps occasionally falling back; and thus we might account for the wonder; and hence, probably, tyrants, or national monopolists, are always less enlightened than the people whom they would crush, or exclude from privileges common to all."

"Well, Sir," said Gerald, "admitting your last statements, I acknowledge myself appealed to for a re-consideration of some former opinions on this subject; you will permit me to apprehend, however, that your religious zeal may still unconsciously induce you to exaggerate the advantages of your present position."

"I have helped you to correct two mistakes, Sir, built upon my conversation with you; I will help you to correct a third. Since the first

dawn of the Reformation—I must conclude rapidly, for we approach the turn off the high-road, at which, you say, we are to part—since the first dawn of the Reformation, my family have been Church of England Protestants—I, my wife and children, (a goodly flock, I promise you,) firmly adhere to the same creed; and I beg to add—still more abruptly—for here the coach stops, and you get down—that for two hundred years, my predecessors held, hereabouts, what I now hold, an independence, though not a princely one, of Irish acres, upon which, should your views and leisure permit, I can assure you an Irish welcome, whenever you do me the honour to inquire for that name ——" and the gentleman, stooping across, touched Gerald's fingers with what he felt to be a card, which, making due acknowledgements for it, my hero transferred, in the dark, into his pocket.

"And certainly, Sir," he added; "the very last avowal you have made supplies the most cogent hint I could receive, as to the propriety of looking closer at all your opinions and statements; it is a powerful comment upon them."

"I am glad you think so; glad that any thing is likely to induce a stranger, newly arrived from England, to study us here, just as he finds us," said the gentleman.

The coach-door was pulled open, and the guard appeared with a lantern in his hand, to say that Gerald's luggage was put down on the road, waiting for him.

"Good-bye, then, Sir," said Gerald; "and if I tarry in your neighbourhood, I shall scarce forget your kind intimation."

"Nor I, should you appear, the spirit in which it is given—good-bye, young gentleman;" and he once more made himself up in his corner, like a man that still had to travel many miles farther. Just then the guard thrust his lantern into the coach, to enable Gerald to arrange his cloak on his arm, and the dull light, striking obliquely upon the stranger's face, momentarily revealed certain strong-marked, smiling features, which Gerald vowed to himself he had before seen, though he only presumed where. But ere he could farther debate the point, the guard withdrawing his lantern, urged him to descend, and Gerald soon found himself standing alone with his portmanteau at the closed door of a

cabin, which formed the angle of the by-road leading to Lower-Court; his departed guardian of the night having advised him to deposit his luggage in the lowly abode, till he could send for it in the daylight.

CHAPTER VI.

"THIS is a pretty situation for me," said Gerald, standing inactive at the cabin-door. The proceedings of the guard had been so rapid and arbitrary, that he had not had time nor presence of mind to suggest any thing for himself, nor yet to make some necessary inquiries. "Of itself, a very capital situation; but taken with the chance of my again becoming an inmate of a Rockite cabin, and 'the great Captain,' as every body says, so active in this neighbourhood, it grows still more interesting. Here I cannot remain, however, in the dense cold of the morning; and forward I must not march till there is light to see my way:" so, putting his thoughts into acts, he knocked at the frail and chinky door.

Without hearing any stir inside, a woman's voice reached him, in Irish; it would seem

that she spoke from her couch. Gerald, wincing at the abhorred language, which he had once thought Welsh, slowly explained, in hopes that his deliberate pronunciation might be understood. He was a traveller, he said, and a stranger, quite unacquainted with the country, and he had to walk up the by-road after daybreak, and till then, would thank her for permission to sit down, and stow his portmanteau in a corner.

"By all manes, Sir, *a-voorneen*," was the second answer; and then, while it might be supposed that the woman of the house got up and dressed herself, an infant, which perhaps, had been sleeping with her, began to scream violently. The mother, in her most soothing tones, tried to quiet it, but without effect; and, amid its incessant expostulation, the creaking door opened, and Gerald entered the cabin.

Here, the darkness did not prove absolutely impenetrable. A girl of about five years old knelt, resting on the palms of her hands, at the hearth, and by her puny yet well-trained puffs, had already spread the latent spark of a sod of turf, intentionally left over-night in the ashes,

to be ready for morning. Two younger children sat, half-dressed, by the embers, anxiously awaiting the promised flame; and still the vociferous infant, careless of all things but the absence of its mother, peremptorily called for exclusive attention from a corner.

The woman officiously took Gerald's portmanteau, and placed it aside. Next, she rubbed a three-legged stool, and adjusting it at the hearth, invited him to sit. Her accent was kind, and, Gerald thought, peculiarly plaintive; it was also tolerably good, that is in its imitation of an English one; and her language was proper and decent. Her next proceeding consisted in sending the little human bellows to try and "pacify" her infant brother or sister on the straw couch in the corner, while the mother, kneeling at the embers, turned herself into a human bellows of greater power, and much more promising effect.

In a short time, indeed, the well-practised animal-machine produced a good blaze amongst the turf. By the light thus afforded, Gerald perceived that he sat in the most wretched and worst-appointed Irish cabin that had yet come under his observation. The last rain must

have found ready way through the thatched roof, for the clay floor was puddled, and the puddle rested in little holes and cavities. He turned his glance to the woman who still performed bellows at the hearth. Her side-face, glaring in the blaze, fixed his attention. It was handsome and young—not more than three-and-twenty.

"Here is a good fire now," said Gerald; "do not trouble yourself any more."

"Thankee, Sir," she said, standing up.

"And are all these fine little things yours?" pursued Gerald.

"Yes, Sir, praise be to God."

"You have been a very young wife, then."

"Musha, very, Sir; but all 's for the best."

"You have not lost their father, I hope?"

"No, Sir, not out and out, entirely, the Lord be praised, Sir."

Gerald's next question included more than interest for the poor family. In fact, the circumstance of finding this cabin without a male inmate, as he had found a former one, pressed upon his private feelings.

"And where is he?" asked Gerald.

"Anan, Sir?"

The question was more carelessly repeated.

"The poor father o' them, Sir?" Evidently she was taken off her guard. A third time Gerald made his inquiry.

"Avoch, Sir, he 's only gone a little way, for the night, on a matter o' business, to try an' bring home their breakfast, maybe; I expect him after the daybreak."

"No doubt you do," thought Gerald.

"And sure that's nigh-hand," she continued, looking out at the door.

"Then it announces my hour for leaving you; at least, I cannot stay much longer: shall I be able to get breakfast at the village on the by-road?"

The young woman assured him accommodation there fit for the King of England; but she offered no refreshments herself, not even a potatoe. "She has it not to offer," concluded Gerald, and he was right.

Again he proposed a question: "Is Captain Rock near us at present?"

She started and grew pale, stammering out—"Who, Sir? Captain who, for God's sake?"

As in a former case, Gerald repeated his words.

"Myself does not know who you mean, Sir, *a-voorneen;* sure, it 's little poor cratures like us ever knows or hears of captains, or curnels, or generals, or great people of the kind."

It was a badly-acted equivocation. Gerald saw that, for some reasons best known to herself, she dreaded admitting to him all knowledge of a personage, with whom, nevertheless, she was not unacquainted. He did not, however, embarrass his hostess any farther on the subject, but in his own mind decided that the sooner the broad daylight would permit him to leave the cabin, the better for all parties concerned.

All this time the infant had been screaming, and its mother now ran to the straw-bed, lifted it up, sat on a second stool, and laying it on her lap, drew to her a wheel, and began to spin; her ingenuity divided between her handicraft work and her endeavours to soothe and please her cross child. Both occupations ended in nothing. Her ill-conditioned offspring would not abate a key or a note of its indignant remonstrance, although, speaking fluently to its unconscious ears, she tried it with coaxing, kissing, threats, promises, and at last,

notwithstanding that she was a meek creature, with a whipping: and the bad flax, which she would fain spin into fine thread, as if in league with the last pledge of her wedded love, kept snapping every moment.

And yet, by a renewed conversation with his fair and perplexed young hostess, Gerald found that neither the cross child, nor the frail flax, nor any thing else in the world, could really put her out of humour. She and her husband were very poor, she admitted, and for some time had been so; "but all was for the best, under God." Now and then she sold winter apples, and a bit of soap, and a few "haiperths" of tape and thread, and three or four tobacco-pipes. Although the flax was bad, she could get twopence a-day for spinning it, from six to six; she should be a rich woman if her husband could find work, or if she could possibly make as much as would lay in one good heap of turf, or if she had half an acre of ground, at the value; but, even as it happened, "every thing was for the best."

"Altogether," ruminated Gerald, "I have never before imagined a model of poverty, meekness, contentment, and industry, united in one person."

"And yet," addressing her, "you have been better off, I dare say?"

"Musha, yes, Sir,"—she dropped her head, and her voice changed,—"only we didn't meet with the best of friends; but I blame nobody; for if I did, I ought to blame *them* that the likes o' me and Mickle has no right to blame, at the first setting out; every thing happens according to God's will, and is for the best."

"What work can your husband do?"

"Field-work *now*, Sir; that is, he'll soon be able for it, when he's quite over the misfortune that got him discharged from his last calling, and, by the same token, that sent us out of a snug cabin into this poor one; our third remove in the world, Sir, and worse than the other two."

"What misfortune do you mean?"

"His thigh, Sir; he broke it in bits."

"And from what calling did this accident get him discharged?"

"Faix, Sir, from one that was better than the field-work will ever turn out for us, though it kept the poor boy a great deal away from me."

"He was a driver of a public coach?" interrupted Gerald.

"Musha, and he was so, Sir," answered the woman, stopping her wheel, and looking with great interest at him.

"And his name, Farrell?" continued Gerald.

"Blessed saints!" ejaculated the young woman, starting up—"and so, it's you, Sir, whoever you are, come back to see us again, as you said you would to Mickle, that day, on the road? It's you that talked kind to him, and gave him good advice, and the twenty goold guineas, and he lying on his back in the strange cabin?—the guineas that sent the poor boy home to us, and helped us to nurse him, many a long day, and paid all our rent, and every thing else that we could never pay, only for them, until a week ago, when they run out to the last shilling? It's yourself, Sir, isn't it?"

"I am certainly the person," said Gerald, inclined to smile at the last question, "who had the pleasure of doing your husband a trifling service upon the day you allude to."

"Trifling, Sir? it saved all our lives!—May the Father o' mercies, that put it into your

heart that day, reward you for it!"—she knelt down, her vehemence at last arresting the cries of the infant on her left-arm—"May the blessing of his young wife and the young mother of his four darlings, be in your road for ever!—och, amen, amen, I pray the good God."

Gerald was not now disposed to smile; he rather felt his eyes infected with the tears that streamed copiously from hers. At the same time he made the involuntary reflection, that in all this there was unalloyed nature and feeling, such as he had never before witnessed. "They are a fresher people than the French or the English, in every way," he continued.

"But there was your own arum, Sir, *a-vourneen;* your own arum! how is it?" asked Moya Farrell, standing up. Gerald assured her, quite well. She pressed her question, warning him to answer her in downright truth and sincerity. He renewed his assurances.

"Oh, then, the Lord be praised!—ay, though it's sooner come round than Mickle's itself, the thigh I mane.—Was there ever any thing to equal it! To have you standing before me, Sir! and my poor boy not in the place!

But you 'll stop awhile, won't you, Sir, *a-vourneen*, to let Mickle see your face ? och ! and he 'd rather look at it, this morning, than at the sun's, if it was summer ! and you 'll never think that it 's in hopes of gaining by it, I mane, Sir,—or—"

" Indeed," interrupted Gerald, " I never will think any such thing of him or of you; I cannot await his return, however ; 'tis now light enough for my walk to the village, and I must leave you, with thanks for your accommodation; but very probably you will hear of me again; meantime, pray take care of my portmanteau. Now, good-bye ;—stay ; I must kiss that chubby fellow that keeps looking at us so stedfastly."

While making his adieus to the wondering boy, Gerald unostentatiously put into his hand an earnest of his breakfast at least; the mother did not notice the proceeding. Then, stepping over her sad threshold, amid all her regrets and lamentations, and her promises that the portmanteau should be as safe " as a chalice on the altar," and her earnest prayers for " luck and grace in his road," Gerald resolutely proceeded on his pedestrian journey.

In fact, he had no wish to meet Mr. Mickle

Farrell a second time, particularly under the present circumstances. At their last parting, Gerald had been led to conclude that, notwithstanding his specious statements, the ex-coachee was an active, though concealed Rockite: and his wife's embarrassment when questioned, a few moments before, as to his absence from home, and her evident alarm, and bungled equivocation at another question, convinced Gerald that, notwithstanding the good advice admitted by Michael to Moya, and his yet lame thigh, to boot, the discontented young man had spent the very last night in Rockite conclave, at least. Gerald therefore would avoid personal contact with his former fellow-sufferer, however strong and sincere Michael Farrell's gratitude might prove. He pitied from his heart the early sufferings of the young couple, and again, and more than ever, accused himself of having, in a great degree, caused them: the character, the person, (though in no unlawful way,) and the manner of Moya, further interested him; and he certainly would see more into their condition, and gain authentic information of their past life, after his arrival at Lower-Court: but for the present Gerald walk-

ed as fast as he could away from their humble residence.

He was doomed, however, to meet Michael Farrel before his arrival at Lower-Court, as well as a good many other people, some of whom he could not have possibly expected to meet.

The by-road did not turn out as well in the reality as it had promised on the map, being deeply indented with ruts, strewn with large stones, and ankle deep almost at every step. The Irish mile and a half, which were to deliver Gerald up to comforts of the village half-way on to his sister's residence, seemed, under all the circumstances, as long as four English miles; and when tired, and angry with Hibernian road-bills, and land measurement, he at last gained his first proposed halting-place, nothing helped to recompense Gerald for his unusual drudgery. The village, supposed so respectable, was pointed out to him by a peasant, partly lying in a hollow, at the foot of a steep hill, from which Gerald looked down upon it, partly stretching up an opposite eminence, the whole composed of thatched cabins. Separated from it, stood a single slated house, which our traveller

supposed and hoped might be the head inn, but the man by his side told him that it was only a new school-house, "built (to use his language) by the Orangemen and the biblicles, to coax the little childer of the place from their fathers and mothers, and try to make black Protestans of them."

Gerald slowly descended to the group of cabins. Of an old woman, who was drying flax-seed before her door, he asked where he could find an inn.

"An inn, Sir?" she said, as if the term proved too high-sounding for her; then checking herself, for the honour of her village, she directed Gerald to a near cabin, upon the wall of which was a sign-board, having Brien Boru (a great favourite with publicans of the neighbourhood, as he had been of their province) painted thereon in all the impressiveness of Prussian-blue armour, regal, red lead mantle, sceptre in hand, crown on head, and long white beard flowing to his breast.

But Gerald could get nothing under the auspices of the conqueror of theDanes. The landlady had no bread; and as her proposed guest would not consent to substitute potatoes for breakfast,

she unwill[illegible] ...im to "the house
with the[illegible] the opposite side of the
villag[illegible] ...get Hogan could "make
off a[illegible] ...d every thing else."

Smi[illegible] ...oitterly, however, at Moya Farrell's gu[illegible] ...ntee, that his accommodations in this village would prove "fit for the King of England," Gerald proceeded to Mrs. Bridget Hogan. Meantime, he did not quite dislike his novel situation. Unknown, unsuspected, and without fear of contact with dangerous characters, he rather congratulated himself upon the coming opportunity of studying real Irish persons and things, for the first time in his life, closely and peaceably. He determined to be very observant; nay, he would use a pocket note-book and a pencil upon the spot, whenever circumstances might require particular attention. And this proved an unwise resolve for him.

Arrived at Mrs. Bridget Hogan's, Gerald certainly found that she could supply him with bread; ay, and with tea, also, and fresh eggs, and new butter, and "the best o' crame:" and so, placing a seat for him in the middle of the apartment, she set about keeping her pleasant

promises. Gerald unbent from his usual manner, and tried to be very civil in what he hoped might be an Irish way; and this, too, was the result of a plan, cleverly suggested by his prudence to meet his situation; and, so far, it did him good, for his landlady seemed very amiable and obliging.

Looking around him, he felt desirous of at once carrying into effect the resolution we have just seen him form; and accordingly, his notebook was placed on his knee, and his pencil pared. He wished to get a close, graphic description of the apartment in which he was. At his first glance forward, however, something occurred to flutter him in his purpose. A grey-headed man now appeared sitting in the gloom of the capacious chimney-recess, who, although he smiled continually, and looked very good-humoured, yet eyed Gerald keenly; and not only were his glances disagreeable to the amateur, but Gerald inwardly started, as he asked himself, "Am I under some nervous delusion? or is there a duplicate face of every face in the world? and have I met and forgotten some one face, that is now reproduced in my mind, and confounded with that of the watchful

old fellow, yonder? or, worse than all, have I, as a kind of animal instinct on my nerves *would* hint—have I really encountered those features before now, upon some occasion of danger, when they wore a very different expression?" Gerald argued thus, however, without showing any discomposure. After a moment's pause, too, he proceeded in his note-taking, passing his eyes over those of the elderly peasant with a careless confidence; and it gradually seemed that Gerald was mistaken in conjuring up a bugbear out of his silent observer.

A second time, however, he was interrupted, though more agreeably, in his task. Nance, the landlady's daughter, came in from the fields, where she had been working, and took a seat near the man on the "hob." The girl had a pair of sparkling black eyes and pretty weather-tanned features, and the brown hair that burst from under her ungraceful cap was curling and glossy. Gerald perceived that she looked at him with intense wonder. He returned her regards perhaps oftener than was necessary for the business he had in hand, and by the silent converse of eyes, so popular between men and women all over

the world, they soon became friends. In fact, after about his sixth glance, Gerald's lip teemed with a smile, and Nance's eyes were ready to flash into the first outbreak of coquetish laughter. Indeed, for modesty's sake, she was obliged to turn away her head.

"Yes," said Gerald, nodding playfully at her, as he again looked up, "you are right; I am drawing your picture—many a less handsome one has been taken—and I will thank you just to keep looking at me, steadily, and sit still, without laughing." A useless advice, as he knew it would prove; for the girl now broke into hearty laughter, at the same time blushing till she grew really handsome.

By this little subterfuge Gerald considered himself enabled to go on with his still-life sketch, and accordingly wrote as follows:—

"I am in a mud-floor cabin, but one of larger dimensions than is generally met with in this country. I see into two inner-rooms, furnished with rude bedsteads, covered with patch-work quilts. Another door, closed, at the end wall, near the fire-place, seems to lead into a third bed-chamber. There is a wheel-

barrow turned up against the wall behind the entrance-door; two wicker-work hampers, used for carrying turf from the bogs (as Nance informs me), hang near it; and at hand is the pig's trough, her mess ready mixed in it—(while I write, the pig comes in, quite consequentially, and munches her food with grunting satisfaction;) farther on, I see a heap of bog-wood (Nance again) inclosed by a ridge of turf; the remains of an old buskin dangles on the wall near the chimney, as a receptacle for odds and ends; and over it is thrown a linen cloth, ragged at the edges, used for hands, pots, glasses, tea-cups, or any thing that may require such nicety. The chimney extends the breadth of the gable wall, only excepting the space occupied by the third door, before mentioned: and from the iron crook suspended in its cavity, hangs the huge black kettle that simmers over the turf blaze to make my tea. And here come in my figures,—Nance, and that smiling old fellow,—confound him! *she* looking like a hope of something I am to get, (I don't say from her,) and *he* like a remembrancer of something painful that has happened to me.

"Hitherto I have been facing the open door of the cabin. Now I turn round on my wooden-seated chair. Upon a kind of wicker dish, also used as a strainer, and called *skeeck*, (Nance still, of course,) appears the overplus of potatoes allowed for madam pig's breakfast, put by with housewifely care for her dinner. Pots, of graduated sizes, black as turf-smoke can make them, succeed; some hanging, some piled against the wall: next, a broken bellows; and next a wooden implement, shaped like an artillery-man's spunging-rod, used for pounding potatoes and herbs into a human mess called—what, Nance?—'*Caulcannon*, Sir;' and the pounder itself?—'Musha, Sir, don't be joking us; *thoorgeen*, Sir;' (and with exquisite coquetry, Nature's well-taught child drops her chin on her breast, giggling, and shooting off at me an up-glance of destructive efficacy: I still pretend that my questions, and my studious looks around, are only breaks in my occupation of taking her picture.) Midway down the side wall, are two sets of shelves, having drawers beneath, one set larger than the other; and they display four cups and saucers, of different sizes and patterns; delft bowls and

basins; a few plates of the same material, still ill-matched; three little stone bottles, once filled with "Warren's jet blacking," and still wearing his label; a metal egg-cup, a—(here Nance stole round, at first without my notice, and gave a shy look over my shoulder to see what I was really about; but, no matter how, I paid her for her peeping; and now she retires again to her hob, laughing merrily at the joke. Query? does not my assumption of Irish good-humour sit prodigiously easy upon me? and, query again, how do I like it?)—To conclude my sketch; under the drawers of the larger set of shelves is a deal-table with cross legs, holding brown crockery-ware, and wooden dishes; and under it, again, is a great commander-in-chief of all the pots of the establishment. From all which it is evident that I sit in an Irish cabin of no ordinary degree, and that Mrs. Bridget Hogan, so denominated, very respectfully, by her humble competitor of the Brian Boru, is a person of some consequence.

"While she bustles about me, preparing my breakfast, I must note her proceedings; and also sketch herself, as well as her house—and that first of all.

"She wears a faded-green stuff gown, that has no forepart; a blue woollen-cloth petticoat; a blue apron, dotted with white spots, tied so determinedly round her plump form, just at the hips, that similar shapes confront each other; her black stockings are darned with white worsted, and her feet thrust into very old slippers; her linen cap, secured tightly under her round chin, surrounds a clever-looking, fresh-coloured, and jolly face, whence that of my friend Nance inherits its black eyes, and its roguish character. And Mrs. Bridget Hogan, according to her grizzled locks, may be near fifty; but there is no wrinkle to denote such an age.

"Now she throws the tea-leaves, or whatever leaves they may be, out of the block-tin teapot, opposite the door: by their tenacity to the interior of the vessel, I judge they have been a considerable time in it; and it seems difficult to eject them. And now she fetches muddy water from (as she says) the well, and proceeds to wash a cup and saucer in one of the black pots.—*Mem.* Not half as hungry as I was one hour ago.—Her authoritative accents call Nance into requisition; I pause a

moment; Nance retires into one of the bedrooms; I hear her sweeping the clay-floor with a worn-out, grating broom; she re-appears, and I am summoned to my breakfast.

"With closed door, I resume at my breakfast-table, certainly as anxious to describe the appointments of the meal as to eat it. I have salt in a wine-glass without a pedestal; the metal egg-cup is placed at my hand, together with a metal spoon of all-work; my tea-cup boasts red flowers running round it, and rests in a saucer exhibiting three blue dogs pursuing a blue hare. As much exceedingly brown sugar as my landlady judged might just sweeten two cups of tea, appears on another saucer; and on another still, half of a small print of butter, with evidence that Mrs. Bridget Hogan had severed it from its brother-half with her fingers, unwilling to trust me with the whole. "The best o' crame" is served in a little copper-coloured jug—I hope it keeps Mrs. Bridget's promise, but I won't look into it; for the really fresh eggs that, to my surprise, lie on a really nice table-cloth, and the loaf of brown bread, that must be available in its

heart, at least, (and I will cut boldly,) half tempt me to forego some of my misgivings in the kitchen, and to recollect, that, after an indifferent breakfast and a worse dinner, yesterday, I have tasted no food for the last fourteen hours—so—"

"The eggs quite a treat—the heart of the brown loaf sincere; but my tea—atrocious. All Mrs. Bridget's distillation has not taken away the smack of the abominable water that was the basis of the fluid. The sugar does not help to purify it; and, both these considerations apart, I cannot, as the black letheanlooking stream issues from the tea-pot, help calling to mind the convictions that some time ago took place against certain concealed murderers, who vended deadly nightshade for congo-tea.

"So, I have done breakfast, resting on the eggs and brown bread; and now take a glance round the bed-room which has served me for a parlour. It is whitewashed, or pretends to be, rather; for the wash seems to have been laid on with a bundle of rods, so streaky and partial is its effect. Besides being a sleeping-

apartment, the chamber appears selected to hold the principal treasure of the house. At one end, resting on the floor, is a great deal chest (I have seen its like before); upon it is piled another of less dimensions; upon that a trunk; and still upon that, a curious black box, or perhaps casket, which, like Hudibras's dagger, is little for its age; overhead—"

But here Gerald was interrupted in his note-taking, by a conversation in the outer-room, which first aroused only his curiosity, but finally impressed him with more serious feelings.

CHAPTER VII.

GERALD has himself informed us, that he left behind him, in the kitchen, Mrs. Bridget Hogan, her daughter Nance, and an elderly peasant, whose connexion with the family he did not know. They, and some new comers, were the speakers in the ensuing conversations.

"Come here, Larry!" bawled the landlady, at the entrance-door, to some one passing by: "What's the new hindhrance between you and that Bignel?"

"Why," answered Larry, in a smart, sharp tone, that Gerald judged to proceed from a hardy fellow of forty, who might do a rash thing without considering the consequences,— "Why, because I won't send the childer to his school, he wants to take the bit of ground from me, though he let it to me for two years."

"Did you make the bargain before witnesses?" asked Mrs. Bridget Hogan.

"Ay, did I; before Shaun Goff and Peery Mallay."

"Shaun Goff you may count all as one as a dead witness, by rason he's in foreign parts."

"That 's a truth," said the staggered Larry.

"But Mallay will come to the fore for you; won't he, Larry?"

"By gonnies! Peery wasn't, as I may say, in a manner, entirely present at the bargain; but when he was working for Bignel, some time after, says he to him, 'Mr. Bignel,' says he, 'for how long a time did you let the ground to Larry O'Dea?'—'For two years,' says Bignel to him."

"At any how, Larry, I 'd see the divvle to fetch him, afore I 'd give him a sod of it."

"After digging and breaking my heart in it, late and early, and making fresh fences," concurred Larry, "and now he wants to give the good of all I done, for a few pounds more a year, to some stranger—maybe, one from his own half-starved country; for I'm sure that 's what he 's about, only he puts it all on the childer not going to be made Scotch Protes-

tans of, just as he turned out the poor Farrells for the sake o' the crony of his that 's on his way to us at last, as I hear."

"We all know that," interrupted the landlady, "and expected, beyant, to-day, or in the evening; only he has friends may ax him to stop a bit on the road, Larry—" sinking her voice.

"And there 's a good look-out for him, Mistress Hogan?" demanded Larry.

"Never fear that."

"And the May-Boy among 'em?"

"Hushth!" whispered the landlady; and Gerald could imagine her pointing at his door.

"But your own May-Boy, ould Dinny?"

"Come in, Larry; here I am," answered a hoarse voice that Gerald traced to the hob.

"And ar'n't you soon for a walk?" asked Larry, his tones now sounding louder, as he had entered the kitchen.

"Maybe so, avich; only first I wish we could hear tidings of that gossip of ours, you spoke of?"

"Poor lame Mickle, the poor boy?"

"No one else."

"But is'n't he *in it?*"

"He says, no; he came to see us, last night, at a friend's place, but it was only to prache a sarmon to us against our evil ways; and then he left us, to go a start farther, on Jim Mullaly's car,—for he's not able to use *shank's mare yet,—and make a noration to a few more friends, a little way off."

"That's quare; what's come over him?"

"The priest, I'm thinking; or as good a hand," sneered the old fellow; and Gerald felt complimented upon the ultimate success of his efforts to reclaim Michael Farrell, which now appeared evident in the admitted reluctance of the young man to countenance whatever scheme of fierce revenge was in progress.

"Sure," continued Larry, "if the Scotchman that's to the fore, and the other that's coming among us, happens to get a visit from some distant relations of theirs, this night, or any other night, it will be as much or more on Mickle's account, than on any other of our own; though there's not one of us but has a little compliment to pay at his dour. Bignel came into the field, a while agone, while I was burning the weeds, and he kicked the fire."

* His own legs.

"I'd kick his skull about the ground, the rascal!" said the old sinner.

"An' I gave him one *peg* (blow), at any rate."

"Musha, did you, Larry? it was a pity you didn't give him plenty when you went about it," said Mrs. Bridget Hogan.

Larry went on in a triumphant tone.

"When he kicked the fire, I took one o' the sods, and I put it down at his feet. 'And will you kick that again, Misther Bignel?' says I; he did give it another kick, and so I gave him one clipe under the ear, in the right place."

"Was it with your fist you done it?" asked the silver-headed sire.

"Yes; but I'm sorry I didn't split his head with the shovel."

"Oh, if you had a gun then, Larry!" said Gerald's gentle Nance.

"I was over talking to Bignel's wife, after you gave him the blow, Larry, just to make an excuse for larning if the bidder for Farrell's farum is expected in the course o' the day, and she tould me Bignel went to swear again you."

"Arra! did she?" asked Larry, in a terrified tone.

"She did; and the Peelers will soon be looking for you."

"Why, then, by gonnies! if they send me to gaol, Bignel will come and saze the ground."

"Don't wait for em," advised old Hogan.

"What else?" demanded Larry.

"Go wait for some one else, along with some one else."

"And will you follow us, Dinny?"

"Whether or no, it's *your* only way, Larry: and then, if it plaises God that ye meet Bignel's crony coming to visit him, why ye can just see the crature safe to Bignel's own threshold, and the both can be axed for a favour on your account as well as others."

"Musha, I don't know what to do—I was never out afore;" and Gerald heard Larry's nails in perplexed contact with his head.

"Well, don't then;—have you the pipe and tobaccy, Larry?"

"Divvle a pipe or tobaccy have I."

"*I* have *a pipe*," said the old fellow jeeringly.

"It's asy to get a pipe, but not so asy to fill it," answered Larry, standing up.

"Don't be going, Larry; what a hurry you're in!" said the landlady.

"Oh! faith, I must be off:" and Gerald heard the tormented Larry make a sudden and hasty departure.

"Larry's heart fails him," resumed Mrs. Hogan.

"I think Bignel will have the ground," laughed her husband.

"Ye want him; and I'll step over again to Bignel's wife, and tell her to send a threateing message to his dour, and maybe that would make him do the right thing," continued the landlady.

"There's enough to be at *the christening* without him, if we only had Mickle," observed Dinny.

"Oh! *he'll* come, when he sees ye bent on it. But, tell a body, Dinny, does any o' your gossips know the kind of a looking crature that's expected at Bignel's?"

"I b'lieve not, Bridget; nor whether he's handsome or ugly, young or ould; but that's no hindrance; sure he's easy to be guessed by the road he comes."

"There's more than one road, Dinny."

"And there is friends of his on every road," answered Dinny.

"Do you think it's walking he'd come from

the high road this way?" questioned the landlady, again sinking her voice.

"Maybe so, by the divvle's stick, Bridget."

It is to be observed that hitherto none of the speakers hesitated to converse at their ordinary pitch of voice, although, with the exception of Larry O'Dea, they must have recollected Gerald's proximity in the bed-room. We may conjecture, however, that judging of his appearance and manner, they set him down as a stranger totally unsuspicious of their secret practices, if not totally ignorant of them, and therefore not at all likely to comprehend the jeer and technicality in which they wrapped their meaning. And, indeed, had Gerald been such a stranger; had he previously known nothing of Bignel and of Michael Farrell, they must have proceeded on safe grounds.

After Mrs. Hogan's last question, and her excellent husband's reply to it, Gerald heard, however, little more than close and earnest whispering; and that little he would have preferred not to hear.

"Pictur! no such thing," were words which reached his ears from Nance, after her mother had whispered some time.

"Well, if it 's he, I believe I saw him afore," he next heard the old fellow say; and in the more prudent tone which followed, he seemed explaining where and how.

"Here 's the boy can make sure, then," resumed Mrs. Hogan, walking to the door.

Other persons now entered the kitchen, workmen from the fields, as soon became evident to Gerald, expecting their noon-tide meal of potatoes. Preparations were made for their reception, and in a short time, talking loudly, and stamping heavily, they sat down to their (at least) smoking board. Amid the jumble of voices, a shrill, youthful one particularly interested Gerald's ear. He listened attentively, breathlessly, and had already identified the speaker, when, at Mrs. Hogan's admonition, "Get up, avich, and see what the gentleman wants in the next room," he prepared himself for a crisis. The mother and son whispered a moment at his door; it was then pushed suddenly open, and the lad whom Gerald had first seen in the sea-coast cabin, and afterwards encountered, nursing his hurt arm, in the field within the bridle-road, certainly stood before him.

They glanced, for an instant, at each other,

but both showed presence of mind. Gerald assumed a commonplace questioning stare, and the intruder an humble, stupid one. His mother had sent him to see what his honour wanted, he said. Gerald very coolly replied that he had called for nothing; and with clumsy apologies, and a clumsy bow, his old acquaintance retired, shutting the door, however, still closer than he had found it.

"And the old genius of the gloomy hob was his fellow-sleeper!" Gerald cogitated, very correctly: "What eyes I have! what a memory! Not a face I meet but I blunder about! Oh! why could I not assure myself of the presence of that demoniacal sire of Rockites, when I first entered this Irish den!"

What was to be done? Sooner than run the evident risk of being mistaken for the bidder over Michael Farrell's head, had he not better avow his real name? That avowal would also be sufficient to save him from the dudgeon of the young brigand, who had formerly taken him for a magistrate come to arrest him. But would it, indeed? Had these people sufficient confidence in the name to allow Gerald to remain possessed of a secret which involved the

lives of the father and son together? Rather, did they not hate him and his brother for neglecting them, as they said, and for sending an Englishman to be their agent, and a Scotchman to be their steward? And, apart from their personal cause of quarrel with Gerald, would not their spirit of Rockism prompt them, of itself, to offer him some outrage? But, both incentives taken together, what had he to hope by declaring who he was?

How could he even prove his assertion? And here Gerald got another fright. The letter which Flood had addressed to him at Morrysson's he put into his pocket immediately after reading it; had not since taken it thence; and now he felt for it, as a voucher of his identity, if indeed his real identity was to be admitted. The letter was not forthcoming. He searched every pocket. He had it not: and if lost since he left the coach, and found by a Rockite, thus the Honourable Gerald Blount must become well known, whether he wished it or not, while delivered into the hands of the Philistines.

The workmen made an end of their meal before Gerald made an end of his disturbed reveries. He heard them pass the threshold of the

open door, one by one. He listened again, and assured himself that Mrs. Bridget Hogan's son remained behind them, speaking in a low tone with his father and mother. Would he at once boldly walk out amongst them? Ere he came to a decision, a new visitor paced into the kitchen, bidding its inmates good-morrow, in a high, peculiar, sonorous accent, that told Gerald he was of a rank superior to those he accosted; and their zealous and humble replies, and the dusting of chairs that took place, proclaimed their admissions of his superiority. Having become seated, he inquired if Mrs. Bridget Hogan had perused the last little book he lent her. The landlady said, not quite, yet; but that it was worth its weight in gold; and she begged his honour would leave it with her till she finished it: and here Gerald imagined the hypocritical face of the dame, hinted by her tone, and perhaps her wink aside.

The new-comer then addressed himself to the man of the house, and asked him if he could read. Dinny professed his regret that he could not.

"Well, then, Dennis," continued the querist, "you curse and swear a great deal, and for the

purpose of demonstrating to your understanding the very great offensiveness of that sin to the Lord of heaven and earth, I have here a few anecdotes that I shall read for you. And the first of them will show what it is you pray for, when you use the common and every-day expression of 'Damn me!' Listen."

This speech, and the following extracts, were spoken and read in a deep, full, preaching tone.

"When the sinner makes use of the phrase 'Damn me'—thus he prays:—'O bountiful God! I beseech thee to shut me out for ever from thy blessed presence; to exclude me for all eternity from the joys of Heaven, shared by the saints before thy throne, and which thy own Word promiseth to those who walk in the ways of peace and blessedness!' And that is not all: for thus further the sinner prays—'Lord, plunge me for all eternity into the fires of hell: enchain my soul and body in everlasting torments!—steep me, for ever and ever, in the fire that quencheth not—to which the fury of the hottest furnace is no more than are the snows of the mountain-top amid the blasts of the bitterest winter!"

He paused, and a general "Lord save us, and

forgive us, poor sinners that we are!" was sent forth by the hearers.

"Upon my sowl, Sir!" began the landlady—

"Oh, shame, Mrs. Hogan," interrupted the lecturer.

"I ax your pardon, Sir."

"Ask not my pardon, Mrs. Hogan; ask pardon of Him who gave you the soul to swear by."

"Well, and I do, Sir; but I was only going to say, that if you stick to Dinny, you'll whip him up to Heaven in no time."

"You speak in too much praise of my poor exertions, Mrs. Hogan: but listen still. The next anecdote will show you the tremendous visitations of God upon those who indulge in the abominable habit of cursing and swearing generally."

"'A wicked and immoral shoemaker, residing near to Pimlico, in the vicinity of London——'"

"All the ways to London, your honour!"

"Yes; but pray listen:—'was much addicted to the cruel and sinful practice of causing cocks to fight one with another——'"

"The baste!" said Nance.

"'Upon a certain day, while engaged in his

inhuman sport, he lost, as is generally the case with gamblers, all he had earned by the lawful practice of his trade for the week before, and he cursed, "Damnation to his soul!" if he would ever again make a bet on cock-fighting. Some time after, he happened to be in the city of York, upon business of his calling. As he walked about the suburbs, he came up with a crowd who surrounded two fighting-cocks, and the Tempter drew him to look on, as a spectator. While he looked, his old weakness strongly assailed him, and he suffered himself to become greatly interested in the success of one of the poor birds. A fellow-gambler near to him cried out, 'Three to one upon the red!' thereby designating the cock opposed to that which the shoemaker thought so well of—'Done!' said the oath-breaker, also elevating his voice——'"

"By gor! he had spirit in him, any how, and he desarved to win," interrupted young Hogan.

He was, as Gerald supposed, silenced by a look; for the reader resumed, so soon as the stifled laugh, succeeding to the interruption, had subsided.

"'Done!' said the oath-breaker, also elevating his voice; and he put his hand into his

pocket to draw forth the money, when his eyes closed, his limbs shook, and heaving a deep sigh, he fell lifeless; a dreadful and memorable example to the wicked!'

"So, Dennis, you see what may come of your immoral habit of cursing and swearing."

"Sure enough, Sir, it's a bad thing to do; and I must try and drop it, in time, faith."

A general discussion ensued between all the listeners, fully condemnatory of the sin. Each, in his or her own way, seemed disposed to give it up, principally because nothing could be got by it. For instance, young Hogan thus argued:—

"And that's why it's one o' the worst sins, your honour. Staling isn't half as bad. If I stale one o' your honour's sheep to-night, I can ate him to-morrow, and my body is the better of it, whatever way it turns out with my sowl. But it's not in the same manner with cursing and swearing; for that brings the sowl into the divvle's own hobble, and my own self isn't the laste taste the better of it."

Gerald was not as much amused by this scene as, under other circumstances, he might have been. He rather engaged himself during its intervals with making up his mind to enter the kitchen

before it should conclude, accost the lecturer, as a stranger in need of direction on his way, and, under his patronage, escape from the Hogans; for, from some cause distinct from their awe of him as a religious instructor, it was evident that this individual was an object of interest to the landlady and her family. Gerald's lurking disinclination to run the chance of being asked for a name by a person sufficiently respectable to take such a freedom, made him still pause, however, when an occurrence abroad seemed to suggest that he need not even so far commit himself.

Old Denny, anxious, no doubt, to spend no more time idly, called upon his son to accompany him to "the work in the field," as he said; and in a few seconds both left the cabin, abandoning the women to the apostle. "Either they have no harmful purpose against me," argued Gerald, "or they prefer attempting it out of doors; but surely not in a populous village, nor even on the road leading out of it, in the broad daylight, and where people unconnected with their atrocities must meet me almost at every step; so, I will only wait till this strange gentleman also takes his leave, not wishing to have him see my person, in my present situation,

and then I can certainly continue my unlucky journey."

More edifying discourse ensued between Mrs. Hogan and the exemplary man, during which she was all submission to his doctrines, and then she put him some questions, as to whether *the debt of his honour's servant-boy to her, would be allowed to Denny at the next payment of rent, and previously be stopped out of her creditor's salary.*

The index to Mrs. Hogan's character, contained in this sudden change of topic, marvellously pleased Gerald; but he was more interested by the evidence it supplied that the gentleman was no itinerant apostle, but a person residing close at hand in the neighbourhood, and withal possessing some local consideration and influence. He was doomed to be more enlightened on the point. When the visitor had disposed of Mrs. Bridget Hogan's query, to her satisfaction, be it added, he proceeded to say,— "That leads me to ask you, Mrs. Hogan, if your silly and obstinate neighbour, Larry O'Dea, has come to see you this morning?"

While the landlady replied in a low and embarrassed voice; "Yes!" concluded Gerald,

"the accent should have at once hinted as much to me—it *is* Clangore's very worshipful Mr. Bignel. Come; now, indeed, I am patronized. Now, indeed, I march forth, for every reason. When this infernal old Rockite woman sees us meet as perfect strangers, her suspicions that I am his expected visitor will vanish. Then, whether or not I deem it necessary to announce myself to Bignel, he will at least escort me towards Lower-Court, whither I can truly say I proceed on business, allowing him to suppose it of an humble kind, if he likes. Besides, though I do not clearly comprehend what danger he stands in from these brigands, it is my duty to hint to him that he *does* stand in some disodour with them."

Before he would enter the kitchen, however, Gerald stopped at his door to catch something else that fell from Mr. Bignel.

"Well, Mrs. Hogan, I will leave for leisurely perusal these little tracts, out of which I have been reading for Dennis, and pray take good care of them."

"Never fear, your honour; they 'll be as safe as if they were in your own desk, at home; see here, Sir;" Gerald heard her unlock, and lock,

some drawer near at hand, and gave her full credit for her assertion; for it struck him that in that same drawer they were sure to remain till called for.

"And as to O'Dea," continued Mr. Bignel, "tell him when you see him, that if he yields up the ground quietly, I may forgive him his recent outrage on my person; but if he does not, that I shall consider myself bound, for the well-being of society, to punish him as far as the law permits."

At this moment, Gerald made his appearance, holding his purse in his hand, and saying to Mrs. Hogan, "Your bill, Ma'am?" The woman, smiling graciously, spoke her bill, "A hog, Sir." Gerald stared. Mr. Bignel, who turned back on the threshold, told him that she meant an English shilling, which then passed for one shilling and one penny, Irish. Gerald thanked the interpreter, and really delighted his landlady, so far as the incident went, by handing her half-a-crown, and declining change. But during all this he noticed that her glances flew from Bignel to him, and back again, no doubt to ascertain if they were acquaintances.

Mr. Bignel was a middle-aged, corpulent, se-

cond-rate-clerical-looking person, and not at all like a Scotchman, or, at least, like a good representative of one. His hair, instead of being red or sandy, was black, as, to an excess, was his beard, notwithstanding its close-shaven condition; his cheeks, instead of being high-boned, were well filled out with firm, though superfluous flesh: and altogether, as has been hinted, he might pass for a professional distributor and expounder of the pious tracts we have just seen him introduce into Mrs. Hogan's family. While Gerald settled his breakfast-bill, this gentleman's small grey eyes were almost as attentive to him as were the landlady's large black ones; nor did Mr. Bignel remove his inquisitive regards, when finally Gerald addressed him.

"Perhaps you will farther aid my local ignorance," alluding to the dilemma about "the hog," "by putting me into the road to Lower-Court, Sir."

"Lower-Court!" repeated Mr. Bignel and Mrs. Hogan, in a breath, both equally surprised—"Here, Tom!" continued the former, speaking to some one from the door; a man led up a horse, saddled and bridled; Mr. Bignel

took the rein from his hand, and spoke apart with him.

Gerald now fully resolved to make the land-steward of his brother's agent aware who he was, and for that purpose remained silent until the conference between master and man should end, when he, too, would speak aside with Mr. Bignel. He turned his back, meantime, to the door, that he should not seem to listen to the confidential discourse outside its threshold.

While thus disposed, "Lower-Court?" repeated Mr. Bignel; Gerald saw that the steward was now mounted—"you 'll be one of the fancy-painters, from London or Dublin, Sir, come down to put the last hand to the vanities that have lately been going on there?"

"You shall know who and what I am in a moment." Gerald stepped out.

"The road is not to be missed," resumed Bignel, spurring his stout horse, "'tis straight forward out of the village: Good-morning, Sir;" and he trotted off.

"Stay, Sir! come back, I say!" cried Gerald.

"Straight forward,—cannot you hear, friend? My duties leave me little time to know much of the comers to Lower-Court."

Mr. Bignel was soon out of sight. Gerald looked round for his man. That person had before disappeared. He glanced to the door of the cabin. There stood Mrs. Hogan, eyeing him shrewdly.

"Musha, Sir," said she, "what need you trouble yourself about finding a road that's as plain afore you as the nose on your face, if it's a truth that it's to Lower-Court you're for going?"

"Have I not said so, woman?" asked Gerald, with sufficient reassumption of his usual manner to startle Mrs. Hogan.

"Well, Sir, and you can no more miss your way than a bird going home to his nest," observed a slow, dull voice, evidently that of a man, from some remote part of the interior of the house.

Gerald, assured that he had not before heard this person speak, now just looked past the threshold into the kitchen to observe the concealed inmate. The mysterious third door, in the end wall, near the chimney, was open, and revealed, beyond it, an old, tall, dingy-faced man, sitting on the ground, his legs spread out,

and employed, with the aid of spectacles, in shaping little wooden pegs out of a piece of deal board.

"What the deuce contingent process of Rockism can this be?" thought Gerald.

"The poor reduced brother o' me, Sir," said Mrs. Hogan, answering his look; "once the natest broguemaker on Ireland's ground, and the best scholar in our parts, and knowing the most about ould things, and ould people; only, for the last years, trade grew bad with him, and the little he does at it now, we let him do among us; and when he hasn't the brogues to make, he makes pegs for 'em; the same he 's doing the present time, Sir."

Gerald did not believe a word of this story, though he might have done so; for it was true. The hero of it arose, and pushing his spectacles up on his forehead, slowly and peaceably advanced to him and Mrs. Hogan. Resuming his explanation about the road, he pointed it out, plainly running over a hill, from which you might drop a stone on Lower-Court, the old broguemaker said, and the sea "quite convanient," (a few miles,) at the back of the house.

"By dad!" struck with a sudden thought, "I may as well walk to the top o' the hill by the side o' you; where's the ould hat?"

Gerald, not liking the over-civil proposal, demurred; Mrs. Hogan earnestly pressed him to accept it; and this questionable recommendation made him still more dislike it. "I shall give too much trouble," he *said*—"The old rascal will lead me into the toils," he *thought*. "Oh, no trouble in life," the landlady assured him, and so did the broguemaker;—"But I had rather not," persisted Gerald;—but he need not be so shy; they persisted in their turn; and away went the old man for his hat.

"Ould Dinny was saying, Sir," resumed the landlady, in a close tone, fixing her eyes upon Gerald's, "that you were taking an account of the furniture about the room; but for what would you be doing that? nobody has a call to my furniture; not Bignel himself."

"He was only drawing it all out, mother," interposed Nance, much to Gerald's relief.

"Go along, you gawk! Didn't *you* say that making the pictur was no such thing?" asked Mrs. Bridget Hogan angrily.

"Yes, *my* pictur; but the pots and the bellows were better things for a pictur, and so the gentleman drew them all out, as I tell you *now*, mother: sure it's his trade; didn't you hear what Bignel said?"—and Nance contrived one or two glances at Gerald: one, coquetish, to suit the first part of her speech; the other, friendly, earnest, and assuring, though Gerald could not distinctly read it.

"Here, now, in the name o' God," said the old broguemaker, re-appearing with a curious, discoloured piece of felt on his head.

"Harkee, Noll," resumed Mrs. Hogan, taking him aside.

"What do you mean? shall I accept the old man's company?" whispered Gerald to Nance, while her mother's back was turned.

"Better for you, and do it bouldly—but don't fear—I'll come up with ye on the road, maybe; we can spake no more, now: I'll watch *the boys* I mane—here's my mother turning round—just throw an arum over my neck;" Gerald did so, seconding the *ruse* with a real something not bargained for, however it was

allowed to pass, although Nance kept struggling to edify her mother, and crying out—"Stop, I bid you! be asy with your behaviour, Sir!"

"Sir, *a-vourneen*, are you for coming?" demanded the self-elected guide, and they set forward, Gerald expressing his readiness and thanks.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE road over which Gerald was led certainly seemed to be the direct one out of the village to Lower-Court, that is, so far as a man could determine who did not certainly know in what direction Lower-Court lay, and who depended on his map alone (or rather upon his recollection of it, for it was safe in his portmanteau) for his presumptions on the subject. Gerald drew farther comfort from the guileless, almost silly features of his old companion, and from his primitive manner and conversation.

Having cleared the last cabin of the village, they found their up-hill way running between uncultivated, swelling grounds, studded with patches of furze and with large stones; no fence of any kind prescribed its limits at either hand; and yet it grew narrower at every step;

and from the ruts and water-channels in its course, the mire and the loose pieces of rock, to say nothing of its abruptness, proved difficult for the pedestrians. The broguemaker had likened it to a bird's flight home, for straightness;—this was partly metaphorical, however. At about half-way to the line of the bleak eminence over which it passed, the road suddenly wheeled to the left, and, like a tired horse, continued to ascend obliquely. And now, looking back, Gerald found himself shut out from all view of the village beneath—indeed of every human habitation, barrenness and solitude alone surrounding him.

All along, the old man, unaltered in his quiet dull manner, displayed the antiquarian lore for which, according to his sister, Mrs. Bridget Hogan, he was so celebrated. He harangued, eloquently, upon "the ould history of Ireland's land," and scarce a little knoll appeared in sight, but he had some marvellous legend for it. Gerald's doubts were wholly giving way, notwithstanding even Nance's hints at parting; there could not possibly be any harm, he was sure, in such a silly old fellow. They made another slight turn in

the road, and the ruins of a square building appeared, nearly upon the edge of the hill, about a mile from the place where they proposed to cross it. As usual, the chronicler produced a cock-and-bull story.

"Oh, ye-a, Sir, and do you see it?" in reply to a remark from Gerald upon the object, which, indeed, seemed of very ancient date—"Oh, Sir, there used to be a bad light shining on that castle in former times, and was the death of many a one."

"How?" asked Gerald.

"It used to shine bright, in the night-time, Sir; and when the poor sowls in their boats or ships saw it, they sunk to the bottom o' the say; but it was put out, at last."

"And who put it out?"

"It was put out, clane, by one that *could* put it out—Saint Patrick, Sir: just one o' the little things he done while he was doing greater things, in them times, to keep his hand in; cursing the snakes and the toads, that they have in England, yes, Sir, and a power of other pisonous cratures. People came to him, Sir, and he making his way near this place, and they tould him of the bad light. 'Show it to

us,' says Saint Patrick; 'maybe it won't kill *me*, boys:'" here the broguemaker assumed an authoritative tone, and spiritlessly flourished his stick, to give Gerald some idea of how the saint spoke the last words—"and then, Sir—but what the divvle!" again interrupting his tale, and again changing his tone, and his manner and simple features, too, into a fierceness that did not please his hearer—"what brings this idle hussey from the work o' the house, to be crossing our road, this way?"

Looking in the direction to which his guide's eyes turned, Gerald saw Nance Hogan bounding up a little ascent that, at one side, edged their path, laughing, and holding out something in her hand.

"Did you forget any thing at the house, Sir?" asked the broguemaker.

"No, uncle, no"—answered Nance, who caught the question, though now she stood some distance before them on the road—"No—but the half-crown the gintleman gave us;—see; my mother laid it down on the dresser, and went out a bit, and I took it up to look at it, and I'm sure it's not good coin."

"Show it here," said her uncle.

Gerald stepped before him, secured it, peered at it, and taking Nance's hint, said he was very sorry indeed, but he was ready to replace it with good money; nay, to give a crown back instead,—if he got some value; and he now "threw an arm round her neck," without any invitation. She secured the crown, but resisted his salute violently, and whispering, "Don't, yet,"—pressed his arm, and cried aloud—"if that's what you want, you must have a run for it;"—and then got free, and galloped down the way she had come, with the reckless speed of a young deer.

Gerald, sure that he understood her, followed at his best. Nance's uncle shouted shrilly after them; and Gerald, glancing back, at last saw the plausible old traitor flourishing his stick in real character.

"Run, run!" cried Nance; and run Gerald did—"but don't close on me," she continued; "I see you can, if you like, though I didn't think you could—musha! where were you born, at all?—ay—and so does *he* see the same thing—pull up, then, in time;—no—not that either—pretend to fall—that'll put him out, cute as he is."

Gerald, worshipping woman's wit in his heart,

stumbled and fell flat, accordingly, at which, laughing loudly, as if in triumph, Nance increased her speed. Her pursuer, allowing himself to scramble, as naturally as possible, for a few more seconds, regained his feet, and continued the chase. They made way through a lonesome, pathless, little valley, one of several between the road from which they had started, and the spacious hollow in which the village stood. The broguemaker's shouts grew fainter on Gerald's ear; and, at a quick turn amongst the fairy knolls around, he a second time looked back, and saw nothing of the hypocritical antiquary. Nance, without a glance behind, also seemed aware that they were now out of view, for she suddenly stopped, sitting upon a large flat stone, and allowed Gerald to come up.

"You know what I'm about, Sir," she said, panting for breath—"so, no use of words; there, straight afore you," pointing to a gap in the fence, some forty yards onward, "is the right road to Lower-Court, and the only one they are not watching, this moment, in hopes of meeting you—so, stir yourself."

"Why should they watch me? They take me for another person, of course?"

"Yes, and there 's no time to show them the differ; and if they and you meet aforehand—Oh, run, Sir, run! my own father and brother went out, a while ago, to wait for you!" here the girl grew agitated.

"I will follow your advice, and I am your debtor beyond expression: these few gold pieces cannot convey my gratitude; but if you call at Lower-Court, to-morrow—"

"Put up the gould, Sir; I did not sarve you for *that*."

"Well, then;" Gerald showed preparations for snatching the prize of the late race.

"No, no!" resumed Nance; "you 're out; I mane, that if I take the gould, my mother will find it after me, and want to know all about it, and that wouldn't answer—behave, Sir—divvle's in you, be asy—by this, and that, Sir, I'll say something to vex you, if—"

"If what now?"

"If you don't stop my mouth," laughed Nance, while recent tears stood on her lids:—"But give over now, in arnest, like a good boy; there 's not a minute to lose; we don't know what ould Noll Thong is doing, while you 're just making a fool o' me here—Stop, I

bid you! bad manners to you, for one strange gorçoon, how did you come to larn yourself such tricks in Dublin, at-all-at-all?—Mind me, I tell you; I won't have the gould; maybe yourself can make use of it; but I'll stale up to the Coort to-morrow, as you say, and when you 'll have an hour to spare from your work within doors, let you stale out the back-way, till I see that you 're safe and sound, for—"

"Nance," interrupted Gerald, rising, while the girl stared at the sudden self-assertion of her companion—"I can come to meet you by no back-ways at Lower-Court, and your great kindnesses and services to me demand that I should tell I am Lady Augusta's brother."

Nance, in her turn, slowly stood up, her eyes fixed on her new acquaintance, her colour gone, and her gaze almost one of terror. "I ax pardon, Sir, my Lord," she began, dropping a quick curtsey at almost every word; but her voice failed, perhaps under softer feelings; tears flowed, and she put her hands to her face.

"My good, kind girl—"

"Whisht!"—she interrupted, letting her hands fall to her sides; "there 's some whistling

going on where I thought nobody was to make it. Run for the road, my Lord!—ould Noll is outwitting me, and I desarve it!—Oh, don't give 'em another moment! To be Bignel's crony, would turn out bad enough in their hands; but if they larn your right name, on this woful day, and they bent on making it end in such a night—oh, my Lord, a-vourneen, run for the road!"

"Farewell, then!" he flung the purse at her feet—"you can hide it from your mother, and don't forget to call at Lower-Court:"—he was half-way to the gap in the road-fence.

"And don't you forget, Sir, my Lord, to keep your name from them, if the ould divvle, my uncle, and the rale divvle, his step-father, sends them in your road!" admonished Nance, keeping close enough to make her whispers tell on Gerald's ear:—"and when you're through the gap, stop your foot, and show neither haste nor hurry—and if you see any body coming again you, be whistling a bit, or, maybe, humming the turn of a song; and spake them fair and bould, and have a joke for them—and now the blessing o' God be in your path, Sir, my Lord!"

Gerald stood on the road to Lower-Court. He looked up and down, and did not see a human figure. He listened for a repetition of the whistling, but heard none. Tired and agitated, he then sat on the rugged fence to recover breath and presence of mind, and arrange a mode of action for future contingencies. Nance's string of instructions, drawn, as they were, from a knowledge of her own tribe, seemed well worth following up, if, indeed, her present pupil had a talent for the lecture. With heart and soul, Gerald loathed, however, the part she wished him to play; the implied equivocation as to his name, and the buffoonery, the singing and the whistling, in the service of an Irish banditti—"Accursed be the moment," he began to think aloud, when three men appeared on the line of the road, where, like the former one, it crossed the summit of a hill; and, smothering his feelings, he tried, after all, to do Nance's tutelage some justice.

The strangers were about a quarter of a mile distant. Gerald advanced to them at an even, careless pace, and certainly "humming the turn of a song." Upon a nearer approach, he soon concluded that he had nothing to fear

from them. Of the three peasants, one was supported at either side by his companions, and came limping along. Indeed, one of his feet scarce touched the ground, and his head was sunk on his breast, while almost at every pace of his supporters he groaned deeply, and they replied by sympathizing lamentations.

"What's the matter, lads?" asked Gerald, now within speaking distance, his late fears almost forgotten in the sufferings of the poor peasant.

"Oh, the quarry, your honour!" replied one —"we were all working in it, there below, at the other side of the hill—and the divvle's own big stone fell on poor Tim's leg, and it's smashed into smithereens, so it is!"

"And why do you move him in such a state?" continued Gerald: "for mercy's sake, let him lie here, at the road-side, and run, both of you, for the nearest surgeon; I will take care of him till you come back."

With earnest thanks and blessings for his honour's kindness, and a ready admission that, of all things in the world, letting him lie quiet would be the best for the present, they accordingly stretched their companion upon a patch

of grass near the fence. The man, still groaning deeply, turned his face to the ground, without moving the limb they pointed out as fractured, and round which was needlessly wrapped one of their celebrated frieze great-coats. Then they stopped to debate, an instant, if it would not be well for one to go back, "the Lower-Coort road," and another forward to the village, in order to call on two surgical practitioners at the same time.

"Or, stop," said the first spokesman, "here 's two sogers marching in from country-quarters to —— town, and since they 'll pass the village, maybe they 'd do our message there; and you and I, Shawn, can run back to Mr. Kelp, that lives nigh hand to the Coort."

Gerald saw, indeed, two soldiers, carrying their muskets at rest on their arms, half-way down the abrupt road by which the peasants had approached him. They came on slowly, walking as if jaded with a long march. The last speaker arose from the side of his groaning friend, and holding his hat in his hand, went to meet them, proclaiming the misfortune and imploring their aid, in a loud wailing voice. His unhurt companion stood looking down on the

sufferer, as if in silent grief. Gerald knelt on one knee, advising the principal of the scene to turn up his face, that he might breathe more freely. The soldiers, vouchsafing short and yet not unfeeling answers, cautiously followed the person who had harangued them, apparently anxious or curious to view the prostrate man.

"Yes, gintleman, dears," pursued the zealous caterer for help, "all we 'll ax ye, is just to bid Mistress Bridget Hogan send out Peter Doyle, the bone-setter, while we run for Mr. Kelp; and this good gintleman, that 's a rale stranger to us, as I tould ye afore, when ye thought I was joking ye, or worse, maybe—but a gintleman, I 'll go bail, every inch of him—he 'll stay with poor Tim; isn't that it, gossip?" addressing his silent companion, who answered in Irish, just glancing up for an instant at the soldier next to him—"yes, indeed, they 'll do it; God reward 'em for so great a charity," continued the less taciturn peasant; "they will, indeed, Shaun; and—see this, now!—just to lighten 'em for the road, we'll take care o' these guns for the cratures!"

Simultaneously with his signal word, the fellow, breaking out into the wildest fierceness

of action, tone, and look, sprang upon the soldier at his side, and wrenched the musket out of the man's hand; the silent mourner closed, at the same instant, with the poor fellow's comrade, and was equally successful; and the by-play of the scene consisted in Gerald's charge jumping up on two unhurt, muscular legs, and with a yell, responsive to the "see this" of his gossip, fastening his gigantic hands in Gerald's collar, and, in a trice, reversing their relative positions.

While the disarmed and captured parties expected nothing but threats of instant death, giggling laughter alone reached their ears, shortly followed by a speech, addressed to the soldiers.

"Don't be afraid, now; it's only these purty things we want *from ye*; barring, we'll be axing ye for the little black pockets ye wear outside of your jackets, on your back parts, there,"—they pointed the muskets, and the soldiers speedily delivered up their cartridge-boxes. "And now, luck and leisure in your road to the village, an' don't forget Peery Doyle, the bone-setter, an' we'll thank you—only, the sooner ye're off, the more we'll be obliged to ye." The soldiers began to walk down the

remainder of the hilly road—"And, d' ye hear, honest boys!—there 's no use in your having the trouble of looking to see what we 're going to do with ourselves; ould Nick sometimes pulls a trigger of a sudden, and we couldn't help it, you know, if your jackets went back to the army-tailor with a hole or two in 'em: so, just keep never minding till ye come to the next turn; an' ye may use the shanks as fast as ye like, just for love."—The soldiers quickened their pace—"Stop, Shaun! don't hurt the cratures—faith, boys, for the matter o' that, ye may run—asy, Shaun, I bid you!" The men rushed down the road, and at the turn spoken of, were soon out of sight.

"And now for Bignel's crony," resumed the director of the Rockite party; "let him up, Tim; 'tisn't here we're to talk to him."

"You mistake me for some one I know nothing of," remonstrated Gerald, as soon as his captor relaxed the iron grasp at his collar, and removed a knee from his person.

"A-then, do we? maybe you were not bound, a little while agone, for Bignel's white house, on Curra-hill, where the nice dinner will be waiting for you?"

"I am not even acquainted with the man you speak of;" Gerald now stood up, well guarded.

"Well, but maybe you seen him, once on a time."

"I would not even be known to him," answered Gerald, skilfully evading the last point.

"Why so, gossip?"

"Because, since I came to this country, every thing I have heard of him makes me dislike his character."

"Why, what did he do?"

"In the first place, he destroyed the poor Farrels"—they glanced at each other—"and I am personally known to Michael Farrel; and if you let me see him, he will assure you I can have nothing to do with Bignel."

"And if we happen to meet poor Mickle, after parting from you, who will we say was axing about him?"

"He does not know my name, although, as I say, he knows my person well, and therefore it would be useless to mention it to him."

"But you may tell it to us."

"Excuse me."

"You'd better, if you're *not* a friend of Bignels'."

"Did you never hear that people travelling, for instance, on mercantile business, are sometimes under an obligation to their employers not to tell their names?"

"None o' your palaver: tell the name that's on you, at once, or we'll say it's all lies you've tould us, since you began to use your tongue; tell it, or come to them that will soon take you, face to face, afore Bignel, along with us to help 'em, and then, maybe, the truth would pop out, at last."

Gerald, comforted by this implied removal of personal danger, and by the certainty that if allowed such a test as the man promised, he might ultimately escape all perils, replied: "I can only assure you, upon my hopes of life and of salvation, that already I have uttered nothing but the truth; my name, however, I am not at liberty to disclose."

"Come off, then!" cried the fellow angrily; "you *are* the man we were sent to watch, though you thought to snake round by Lower-Coort to your crony, and now think to bambouzle them that's listening to your stories;

what else hinders you from answering our honest question? what else brings you amongst us? Seldom 's the time that one like you comes this road for any thing but harum. Hurry, boys, down to The Dry Lodging."

To their right, far under them, was a valley similar to that through which Gerald had pursued Nance, but more extensive, and more winding. Down into this they hurried their prisoner, bounding over rock, and tuft, and bush, with an agility and a headlong speed which he could not rival; in fact, during this race he fell, in reality, and his captors, muttering curses in Irish, were compelled now to support him along —now to regulate their progress by his. Occasionally they addressed him in ironical boast of their double success over him and the soldiers, giving him to understand, that the encounter with the muskets was quite a providential "God-send," while they were engaged, at Noll Thong's hint, in the more important duty of crossing his road, from the other, by a short cut. Traversing the bottom of the valley, the party often wound to the right and to the left, sometimes coming on cultivated patches of ground. Then the soil began to grow marshy

and black; and at last they entered an extensive turf-bog, which, however, was still quite enclosed by successions of knolls and eminences, barren and rock-strewn. The bog had been worked, as was evident from oblong piles of black turf, called clamps, which appeared at different parts of it, as well as from its divisions into pools of water, intersected by causeways of the soft soil, communicating with each other. Upon one of these causeways, attached to the more solid land, Gerald was ushered by his conductors. Here they were obliged to help him on more assiduously than before; for while the trained "bog-trotters" bounded, like deer, out of every slough and hole, Gerald tripped or stuck fast. Not long pursuing a straight course, they turned upon many other tracks through the bleak waste, passing different huge piles of the fuel that had been wrought out of it, and at every step approaching, though circuitously, to its centre.

"Do you hope to find your Dry Lodging hereabouts?" asked Gerald, when at last they paused, and seemed to listen.

"Never fear, my boy," he was answered; "there it is, in the inside o' that divvle's own

big clamp, that looks to be as substantial as the rest, only it isn't—" the man pointed to one a short distance off, upon the track-way they were now pursuing—" whisht!" he resumed, as a loud burst of laughter issued from the singular den—" I wonder what 's the fun among the boys, to make them screech so hearty? Stale asy, and we 'll ketch 'em at it, whatever it is;" and setting the example, the speaker trod lightly forward.

At the remote corner of the clamp, after turning which was the entrance into its interior, the party again paused, and Gerald now became the most interested of the listeners; for, quickly succeeding to another gleeish laugh, he heard the following words, uttered in a voice that there was no mistaking:—

" Very indubitably, yes, gentlemen-Rocks; and furthermore, allow the most shadowy indication of a hint, to the effect, that by permitting my well-esteemed roadster to perish in yonder Stygian pool of bog-water, your conduct may be designated as embarrassingly unhandsome."

CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER loud laugh followed the words which Gerald overheard. It was evident that Flood was a source of great amusement to the Rockite party. "I am safe," thought Gerald; "it is not in human nature to harm him, or any friend of his; but, first, let me take a precaution." He tore a leaf out of a small memorandum-book, and requested permission of his guard to write a line upon it to the gentleman inside, who was a friend of his. The man suspiciously asked what was the use of writing, when he could walk in and see his friend at once? He said that the gentleman might receive a shock at his sudden appearance in such a situation, for they were very great friends indeed. This explanation, assisted by a sovereign, (and here Gerald wondered that he had been permitted to keep his purse,) was allowed to pass; so he penciled in French the following words:—"Call me by any

name but my own when we meet. Yours,—an old class-mate."

One of his captors went in with this communication; and as soon as Gerald heard Flood's absurd ejaculations of surprise, he signified his readiness to enter the hollow turf-clamp. At sight of his friend he could scarce refrain from laughter. The exquisite sat on the floor of the den, his hands clasped round one of his raised knees. It would seem, that when taken by the rovers, he had been dressed in civil attire, without any indication of military character about him. An almost white and beautifully cut surtout was buttoned to his chin, but appeared splashed and stained with bog-water and bog-mire, as if its wearer had often tripped and fallen during the progress to his present retreat; one of his feet was bootless, some particular spot of the yielding causeway having doubtless played bootjack to him; and his usually rosy cheeks were pale. The listless self-command of his features remained, however, with little change from its every-day character. "Friend of my bosom," he said, rising as Gerald entered, "let me, even in reverse of fortune, in captivity,

and amid turf, embrace you. This will be permitted, warriors of the bogs," he continued, bowing around to a formidable circle of peasants, mostly armed, who answered with renewed laughter; "this will be permitted to the David and Jonathan of your modern days, meeting, as we do, in unfelicitous though honourable company."

"How in the world, Sir Tristram, have *you* got here?" demanded Gerald.

"You may suppose me, most worthy, issuing, well mounted——"

"Call each other by your right names," interrupted a voice, which Gerald recognized as that of Dinny Hogan.

"Even as you wish it, be it, my general, for such I conclude you are, sitting here, in head-quarters, awaiting the execution of your various commands, issued to your gallant force; and how trustily observed, the friend of my youth and his poor admirer will lastingly witness. Wherefore," again addressing Gerald, "good Daniel Mahaffy, suppose me, in answer to your question, issuing, I say, well mounted, from the town of ———, and innocently bent

upon paying a visit to certain fair features, somewhere in this neighbourhood, shining and blooming ——"

"Ay, but where, in the neighbourhood?" again interrupted Hogan,—"you won't answer that, though we often axed it afore."

"Willingly should I, Excellentissimo, did chivalry or manhood even remotely permit; but who amongst your gallant band would counsel me to do so? Who amongst them would do so himself, in my situation? Who is here so recreant as to proclaim to the world his triumph over coy beauty? To point out to squint-eyed Suspicion the generous nymph he may have slightly caused to smile upon him: in other words, rather more generally used, day after day, who is here so vile as to kiss and tell? I pause for a reply."

"No one, by the powers o' man," roared a score of laughing voices. "Go on, my boy," continued a young fellow, the most delighted and edified of his party; "give the general, as you call him, more of it."

"No one, I am ready to uphold to the world, no one!" resumed Flood: "and how, then, can I be fairly or amiably admonished

to do that which would shame the most beardless lip, or the most reverend hairs it is my happiness to harangue? Nay, Excellentissimo, here, on my couch of turf, let me lie, a sod of turf be my only food, a bowl of turf-water my only drink, the bottom of a pool of the same liquid my early grave;—let me, I say, eat of turf, drink of turf, live on turf, sleep on turf, and of turf let me expire; but hope not, aged chieftain of turf-bogs, that your poor prisoner, Valentine Blennerhasset by name——"

"Bother, my chap," still interrupted Dinny, "that 's no more your name than the name you gave your comarade is his right one, or than the *raumawsh* you 're spaking is the truth. And, boys, it 's trying to make fools of us he is; don't ye hear him about the turf?"

"Well, and let him try it, and what harum?" said the lad who had before spoken.

"Yes, when he's the biggest fool among us," observed a second.

"And we having more o' the laugh than him, barring he can do it with the back of his face," assented another.

"And the crature is right about his sweetheart, whoever she is," resumed Flood's warm-

est advocate; "and no more to Bignal than I am, after all."

"That's plain to be seen," agreed Dinny; "for never such an *amadawn* came from Bignal's country."

"But the other, that's hand and palm with him," remarked a second elder.

"Not the man we want, either; just afore the boys came in with him, Nance was here and tould me as much; Bignel and he stood face to face, at my thrashold, and didn't know one another."

"Admirable Nance," thought Gerald.

"Then, what are we to do with them?"

"It's hard to tell," answered Dinny; "the both has more knowledge of us, boys, by this time o' day, than we'd like they'd go away with, to give to the neighbours."

"And one of 'em more knowledge of you and me, aforehand, father; and more knowledge of where we're to be found, when convanient, since to-day morning, than he ought to be let to go away with," said Dinny's son.

"We will pledge our words of honour, as gentlemen, to conceal every thing we know of you, or have known of you," said Gerald.

"Bind ourselves, by regular treaty, to such a course, very certainly," agreed Flood.

"As gintlemen!—how do we know what you are at all?" pursued young Hogan; "and *you* most of all——didn't you once try to take me up, only my father made you run for it?"

Gerald eagerly explained how mistaken was the speaker in his notion of the rencounter alluded to. "We will go in your company, to one of your priests, and give an oath of secrecy," he continued.

"The priest!" cried Dinny, with a sneering laugh—"which o' them? Is it Father Dick, that found himself lying in the glin o' Boyle, the other night, with more holes than breath in his body, just for meddling too much with what no ways concerned him? Musha, my boy, the priests and some o' their neighbours aren't as good friends as you think."

"Nien," said the second grave counsellor, "that cock won't fight."

"So, as I said afore, it's hard to tell what to do with 'em, bould boys. One thing is sartain, howsomever;—they can't go their road to-day, for fear they 'd happen to spile the night's fun, unknownst to themselves."

"Yes; bring the sogers on us, or give the wink to Bignal," added young Hogan.

"Are our fair pledges nought, brave captors?" asked Flood.

"We don't believe a word out o' *your* fool of a mouth;—shet it," replied Gerald's youthful enemy.

"Out-spoken gallant," resumed Flood, "you are not, permit me to suggest, the most reasonable or civil of your tribe; no other tongue here goes the unseemly and somewhat hazardous length of inducing the shade of a doubt upon the honour of your captives."

"What do you mean by hazardous?" demanded young Hogan fiercely.

"Whisht, Tom, good boy," interrupted Flood's former admirer, "and let us spake more in raison. Serjeant Dinney, there 's no denying that the gintlemen must stay with us the night; what 's to happen after, will all be according as the future may turn out to be. And there 's some sense in that, I 'm thinking," added the young councillor, vain of his wisdom.

"There is," said Dinny's elder friend.

"And no one has a right to say as much on that head as Captain Mickle," continued the

lad: the majority loudly assented;—"and so, we must only wait for him, on this business, as well as on the rale business o' the night."

Again there was a cheer of acquiescence, which revived Gerald's fallen hopes, and he hastened to say—"We are satisfied with that arrangement, and thank you for it: for I have no fear of meeting the person you allude to; he and I are not bad friends."

"What fool's words are you spaking, at all?" demanded Denny.

"I mean plainly to say, that Michael Farrel and I are known to each other;" many of the listeners started, and all looked astonished.

"And where did ye meet first, might a body be axing you?" catechiscd Denny, with his sneer.

"*You* need not ask," retorted Gerald, more boldly than prudently as he came to the correct conclusion that the old Rockite must be perfectly aware of who it was that befriended Farrel when he fell from the coach, inasmuch as he had seen Gerald mount to the seat beside the ex-coachee, and no doubt had afterwards learned from the sufferer's own lips, the ser-

vice which Gerald now for the first time hoped might be remembered in season ;—" *You* need not ask, Mr. Dennis Hogan—" again the party looked surprised—" for, if I do not greatly err, I saw you run into the cabin to Michael Farrel, upon the day he broke his thigh, and I my arm, just as I entered my post-chaise to ride to Dublin."

Denny coolly said—" You might happen to make a mistake ;" but the rest of the Rockites clamorously proclaimed their knowledge of a strange gentleman's kindness, upon the occasion spoken of, to their former captain—Michael and his wife had spread the story far and wide—and they were sure, so they were, that Gerald must be the good Samaritan : the men who had captured him on the mountain-road, testified his recent avowal, to them, of an acquaintanceship with Farrel ; and finally, after being desired to describe his friend's appearance, and after submitting a satisfactory portrait, shouts of good-will arose from all, and many crowded round him, to assure Gerald and his ' crony' of protection, until the arrival of their chief leader.

"Again we embrace," said Flood, theatrically folding his arms round Gerald—"again I hold you to my heart,—now, as well in gratitude as in love, adventurous and life-preserving Mahaffy."

"But it's a shame for Mickle to keep us waiting to know his pleasure," observed the elderly peasant before spoken of, after the new laugh which Flood sought to produce had somewhat subsided.

"Maybe he thinks we are to take him at his word, and won't come at all," said Denny.

"And it seems we can't have the pleasure of bringing Bignel's gossip to the dour, as we thought we could; here's two o' the roads he'll travel missed already," resumed his colleague.

"Let the Boys run out again," advised old Hogan: "but stop—the man we want is coming, at last, I'm thinking—see there."

"Yes, the patroul from the low road," cried several.

"But how careful they are of him," remarked one; "giving him a jaunt here on their showlders."

"Maybe he wouldn't walk for them," said Denny.

"And how he kicks and tears with his legs, ay, and hits them with his stick," observed Gerald's young advocate: "musha, I wonder how they let him do that."

"Flood!" whispered Gerald, "lo, who comes to share our captivity?"

"Ha! No,—it were redundantly too excellent; call the apparition some evil, boggy, amusing thing, in his shape," answered Flood.

"Musha, what an ould man he is, after all," continued the last Rockite speaker.

The entrance to the turf-clamp faced a causeway through the bogs at right angles with that by which Gerald had gained it; and along this track, and now near enough to be identified, certainly came Mr. Gunning, his hat and wig gone, and borne, as the spectators have noticed, on the shoulders of two athletic fellows, who, with all the strength of their clasping arms, could scarce keep his foundered legs secure, while they were therefore compelled to excuse as they might the occasional visitation of his stick on their sides and thighs. He seemed

half frantic with rage and impatience, and kept crying out, as he neared the retreat, "Rascals! what 's all this? what confounded place? let me down, I say! My leg, you reprobate! I mean you that hold my left leg! you crush it, you cruel villain! Take that, and be d—d! What am I to do here? Who are those scoundrels, yonder? who or what are you all,—curse and confound you, one and all, together!"

"Here he's for ye," said one of his porters, as both trundled down Mr. Gunning under the roof of the den; "and our notion is, that it 's the ould divvle we 're after carrying on our showlders, not to talk of an ould Scotchman." Gerald and Flood had stepped aside to indulge the laughter that rang through the turf-cavern.

"Scotchman! do you take me for a Scotchman?" asked Gunning, still furiously, as he sat squatting on the soft ground.

"Yes; and you 're name is Macintash?" said Dennis Hogan.

"Macin-devil!" screamed Gunning: "Macin —be d—d to you!" he continued, beating the turf puddle beside him with his stick. "It's a confounded lie, whoever you are that says

it !—I'm an Englishman, and no Scotchman ! I hate a Scotchman, if that's any use to me,—and now what have you got to say ?"

" As sure as you have mistaken my friend and myself," began Gerald, advancing with Flood——

" What, the deuce !" interrupted Gunning, staring at them : " Aha ! I see it now, as plain as my stick. 'Tis all your work, you brace of puppies ! To give me a taste of Irish welcoming to the bog-holes, as it were ! but if I don't remember your jest,—stop though ; you couldn't come here to the world's-end, merely for that—and then, why or how *have* you come here ?"

" My dear Sir," resumed Gerald, making a secret sign, " give us time to speak, before you say any more ;—I was about to state," he continued, turning to the man, " that as sure as you have mistaken my friend and myself, you have also mistaken this gentleman."

" Yes, I promise them ; they 'll soon find they've caught a Tartar," interrupted Gunning.

" For," Gerald went on, " he is well known to both of us—although—" again glancing ex-

pressively at Gunning—"he may wish, *as we at first wished*, to conceal his name."

"I don't wish any such thing; not a bit; why should I? *I*'m not ashamed or afraid of my name—'tis Gunning—Miles Gunning—and my brother is Mr. Gunning, of Belleview, not many miles from this cursed place."

"A man we like in our hearts," said one of the Rockites, which assertion was confirmed by an encomiastic uproar.

"Do you? I suppose he must be much obliged to you,—though I'm not."

"He's a good man to his tenants, though not bred or born in the country," added one of the eulogists.

"Thank you much for your information," resumed Gunning; "though here I am, his brother, also coming to live amongst you, I fear, and dragged off my horse, and forced to this infernal nook, on my road to dine with another of your neighbours, Mr. Knightly."

"Mr. Knightly?" was repeated by all the hearers; "three screaches for Mr. Knightly! and let no friend of his fear hurt or harum from us," pursued an earnest voice.

"Hurt or harm?" retorted Gunning: "why,

what else can you do to me? Confound your assurance. Where 's my horse? where 's my hat? where 's my wig? And how am I to get across yonder labyrinth of black water and quagmire?"

"Supposing we were to make all that as convanient as we could, after what has happened," began a spokesman——

"Yes, after what has happened, indeed," said Gunning.

"Would your honour swear down on the book, aforehand, not to tell of us?"

"My honour will swear down on the book no such thing."

"Maning to say, Sir, that if we let you off this moment, you 'll complain of us to the neighbours the next?"

"Yes; meaning exactly that."

"Then we believe your honour can't ate your dinner with Mr. Knightly, this blessed day."

This threat, proposing a very climax to his hardships, made Gunning more violent and vituperative than he was before,—the men passively enduring his abuse, partly out of love to his brother and to Mr. Knightly, partly

because the frenzy, as well as the appearance of the old gentleman, amused them. Seeing them laugh aside, he lost all patience, and once or twice strove to start up.

Gerald addressed him, in the hope of prevailing on Mr. Gunning to submit quietly to his situation, by giving him to understand its exact nature. He stated that Flood and he had been kidnapped, just as he had been; he made him conceive how it had happened, and that they were all in the hands of a formidable Rockite band—(here Mr. Gunning cried, "They be d——d!" and looked round fiercely at them;)—he hinted the kind of outrage which they were preparing to commit; and lastly, Gerald sought to calm and comfort his old friend, by assuring him of the protection of Michael Farrel, and implored him to collect his thoughts, in order to give him, Gerald, effectual support in endeavouring to persuade Michael and his men, upon the arrival, in the dreary haunt, of that important personage, from going to Bignal's house upon any hostile intent.

But Mr. Gunning was little soothed after all Gerald could do. He said, "Pish!" and

"stuff!" at each word that did not provoke him into violent invective, and at last began to complain of his leg, rubbing it tenderly, and calling down vengeance on the head of the malignant savage who had treated it so roughly. And this brought Captain Flood once more upon the stage, in a prominent and novel situation.

"Arra, let the poor boy alone, with your cursing and swearing, you ould sinner," said young Hogan, observing upon Gunning's abuse of his comrade—"how could he know that you were such a *bocca?**"

"Hold your tongue, you monkey," snarled Gunning.

"Hold you, your tongue, you father o' monkeys," retorted the young savage.

"Inevitably, friend," said Flood, turning to the rude youth, "I am rather bound to repeat, that you may be said to be the least polished of your brave people."

"A crooked straw for what *you* say."

"And moreover, allow yourself to comprehend, that here I may not stand to hear you contribute to your former want of courtesy to-

* Contemptuously used for *lame person.*

wards my poor self, by aggrieving the gray hairs of——"

"Why, he has no hairs at all," broke in the lad, laughing ironically, as he pointed to Mr. Gunning's close-shaven head. The old gentleman missed a blow at the speaker, while Captain Flood continued.

"In that respect, athletic stripling, Art has incontrovertibly left him as deficient upon the exterior of the cranium, as Nature hath left you in the interior of the same: still may my words bear utterance, according to metaphorical usage, and therefore I go the length of asseverating, (again putting aside your indelicacies towards Valentine Blennerhasset, who addresses you, including, I would fain admonish you to remember, a salute from your stalwart hand, upon his induction to this soddy tent;) that I rather conceive myself urged to object to your strong language, directed towards a captive, whose hairs *would* be gray, or grayish, if they were permitted to shoot forth; and whose body is infirm, and unprepared to recompense your misconduct."

"Aha, Murtuck, take that, and divvle mend you!" cried many of the hearers, who, amid loud laughing, evidently felt gratified at

the vaguely-conceived rebuke experienced by young Hogan.

"And how will you help yourself from standing there to listen to any thing I have a mind to say?" asked the admonished party.

"Even thus:" Flood stepped into the middle of the turf-floor, as gallantly as he could, considering the halting-pace induced by his having one foot booted, and the other bare—"before this brave band, I wish to be understood as now arraigning you of the deficiences in good conduct, already enumerated; before them, whose honour, I dare venture to believe, is as certain as their bravery, I incline to denounce you as an individual deserving of gentle personal chastisement therefor—I also solicit permission to become the instrument of awarding to you your deserts; and finally, on this good quarrel, and always with allowance from the tribunal now besought to judge between us, I defy you to single combat, and heaven defend the right."

The cheer that followed this speech, barely understood in its tendency, was uproarious: "All fair, all fair!" they cried, and a group of seconds soon stood at Flood's side.

"You mane, by your *raumaush*, to ax me to fight you?" demanded young Hogan.

"Thou hast said it very positively," replied Flood.

"Come, this *is* good, after all," said Gunning, settling himself as comfortably as it was possible on his primitive seat.

"Are you mad?" asked Gerald, catching Flood's arm.

"With a method, perhaps," answered his friend.

"To be sure he is, and nothing else," resumed the challenged: "look at him,—does he want me to break him across, at the first snap? And, do ye think I'd shame my father's son, by pulling the sting out of such a wasp as that?" The gigantic youth pointed at Flood's refined waist.

"Words may be called idle, robust foeman," observed Flood; "in stature and weight, I admit your preponderance, though flatterers have designated me a goodish enough 'un; also, about the region above the hips, my span is less than yours; though here, art may mislead your primitive judgment; and though the pec-

toral muscles, the deltoids, nay, even the osteology of the shoulders—"

"Don't be bothering with your gibberish," interrupted the sullen youth; "but if you *will* try it with me——"

"He will,—to be sure he will!" exclaimed several, clapping Flood on the back: "and fair play he must have, by the powers!"

"*How*, then?" continued young Hogan.

"Choose your mode," answered the challenger.

"You're for the fists, I suppose, after your English fashion?"

"If so it please you, fair foe; or more in accommodation to your brave Milesian practices, let it be a trial at wrestling, or a play at quarter staff, by you denominated shillelagh."

"Let it be one after the other," shouted Flood's most zealous seconder, the same lad who had before pleaded Gerald's cause: "since Captain Mickle keeps us waiting for him, it will be good sport to fill up the time, boys;—so, the fists, first; the wrastling second; and the sticks at last."

Again there was loud assent, which young

Hogan scowlingly said, "With all my heart," and instantly pulled off his coat.

Flood did not so soon prepare himself for battle; his first care being directed to arrangements for a ring, and enumerations of the rules of fair play. In these matters he found a zealous ally in Mr. Gunning, who, half-supported, half-hobbling to a corner, gave out his commands with a loud, sharp voice. The Rockites, gleeishly enjoying the scene, readily carried into effect the instructions of both; and Gerald derived some comfort from observing that, however his old friend might deport himself, fair play and fair feeling were certainly to be expected. Even old Denny, smiling in real good-humour, seemed disposed to let his son take his own fortune, and more than once applauded Flood's spirit, calling him "The divvle's own quare gorçoon."

With the exception of two seconders,—Gerald one,—at each side, the peasants stood three deep round the turfy apartment, and thus a ring was formed. Young Hogan stepped out, and called to his opponent to come on. Flood implored him to have patience, while he got through the needful preliminaries. Sitting down, he first

craved the aid of his seconders to pull off his single boot, in order to allow him to stand evenly on his ground. This proved a difficult task, as, from its having been saturated with bog-water, the delicate article clung to his foot; and the spectators much enjoyed the operation, eked out as it was by the intentional hard tugs of the peasant, which occasionally dragged Flood from his place. At length the challenger was free to stand up; and then his final preparations for battle ensured an increase to the mirth of the spectators; for when he had doffed his white surtout, green body-coat, and vest,

"Why, it's a woman is in it!" cried his antagonist, starting back, as if in terror, and pointing to the stays which were buckled tightly round the dandy's waist.

"You considerably err, primitive being," said Flood, calmly and skilfully proceeding to divest himself of his elegant incumbrance, "as, I take your patron saint to witness, shall ultimately appear to your dissatisfaction." He flung the stays to his peasant friend, who held then up between finger and thumb; and then Flood, whispering Gerald, "Now, Tom Crib, be honoured in your favourite pupil," spiritedly threw himself into

excellent attitude, and saying aloud—"For old Ireland's chivalry, whose son, after all, I am!" awaited his foe.

Hearty shouts answered him. It was evident to Gerald that, notwithstanding his great stature and strength, the challenged party must fight under disadvantages, of some of which he was conscious—namely, a bad cause, and the unfavourable wishes of his friends. But what he had most to fear he could not perhaps sufficiently estimate,—Flood's coolness, "science," and confidence. The battle began. He made a furious onset, aiming blows, the least considerable one of which must have decided the contest, had it told. But his antagonist parried them, with a skill that is only to be acquired; nimbly jumped round him, or retreated; until, at the entrance to the ring, he found opportunity to inflict a hit under the ear, which brought down Hogan, as if he had been shot. Those who were not silenced by absolute surprise, cheered loudly; and Gunning, all his sufferings forgotten, became vociferous with delight.

"He 'll never come to time!" cried the old gentleman, as umpire, looking at his watch.

Hogan that instant sprang from his second's knee, not quite recovered, and still more blinded by rage, and jumped upon his challenger. He received between the eyes a second warning to be more cool, and a second time, after staggering, fell. The third round was a scramble on his part, by which he succeeded in throwing Flood; but not before that gallant person's knuckles had made free with every feature of his face. The young tiger would have leaped on his prostrate foe, but that he was prevented. Flood, now determined to keep him off, fought the next round admirably, and with another hit under the ear, and a 'left-hander' in the throat, as he went down, so far won the battle. Hogan did not answer the call to time.

Amid roars of applause, Flood's hand was shaken by almost every Rockite around him; and many offered 'his share' of the illicit whisky which others poured down young Hogan's throat, or applied to his bruised and bleeding face.

"Let me at him again!" cried the hideous-looking fellow, scrambling up. His friends informed him that he was beaten, so far, accord-

ing to all the rules of fair play. He would not hear of it. They insisted: "Well; I'll wrastle him, then," he added.

"My brave old class-mate," said Gerald, "well have you reminded me of your boyish victory over the hot-headed Milesian, at Westminster; yet I dread this second trial."

"Worthy fellow," answered Flood, deliberately tearing off the skirts of his Bond-street coat, in order to furnish himself with a wrestling jacket, "if this juvenile giant will but engage me at what they call "the Fingallian," or "collar and elbow—" (remark my knowledge of their technicals, acquired in early youth, and, it is probable, in later life, amongst them)—then shall I but slightly value his utmost; but if he rather choose their "long-arm-wrestling," I incline to agree that you may account your poor well-wisher a broken-necked, or broken-backed man. Prudence, and a good cause, however, aided by your pious aspirations, befriend me."

"Here I am," bellowed his antagonist.

"Collar-and-elbow?" asked Flood.

"Arra, bother, here it es!—" and, rushing forward, he seized his hated foe round the

small of the back, with both arms, clasping his hands firmly together, and stooping a little from his hips. Flood secured, in return, as good a gripe as was left open to him; but his anticipations of this mode of wrestling proved correct; he had now to contend with mere animal strength; skill or activity little availed him; and Hogan, after a few tugs, threw him a heavy fall, to which Gunning's groans, more than his champion's, responded.

Gerald flew to take him up, much alarmed. The gallant though absurd fellow was not, however, materially hurt, and soon recovered his breath and spirits. His other seconder beckoned him aside, while Gerald strove to persuade him from farther struggle against the colossal muscles he had to encounter. "Thanks, amazingly instructive friend, and I will remember," said Flood, speaking to the peasant, as he soon joined Gerald; and again to the tug he would go.

Now he secured a better hold than at first, and for a longer time baffled his opponent's furious attempts to throw him. Hogan lifted him from the ground, and dashed him downward; he alighted firmly on his outspread feet:

and suddenly, while the revengeful lad forced him back, Flood dropped on one knee, and aiding the sleight with his hands, allowed the young brigand to propel himself, head-foremost, over his shoulder.

"Was *that* it, esteemed tutor?" he inquired of his rude seconder.

"Nothing else it was—hoo!" and the man, jumping high, slapped him on the back.

But at the third and fourth struggle Flood was thrown; and a fifth fall might have proved very dangerous, if his trusty squire had not skilfully broken it. When Flood gained breath, he addressed his audience.

"In this passage of wrestling, I may be allowed, without faint-heartedness, to indicate my admitted inferiority. Victory to the descendant of your ancient giant and captain, Fin-mac-cool. And so stand we equal, battle for battle, if, indeed, success in the horse-like quality of tugging and of throwing man, be esteemed as glorious as triumph in the noble encounter of the pugilistic ring. A third species of engagement must, nevertheless, proclaim the real victor. Give unto us the shillelaghs."

Smiling perfect confidence, young Hogan grasped his primitive weapon.

"He looks success," remarked Flood to Gerald, "but he may not be so near to it. Their shillelagh play is, incontrovertibly, admirable; yet have I practised it; and my rather studious attention to the broadsword fence, under eminent tutors of Albion, of Germany, and of the Gaul, may moreover slightly stand my friend upon the present occasion."

Again the speaker made correct calculations. Though Hogan came on, shouting and dancing, and whirling his cudgel round his head, at the rate of a hundred flourishes to a minute, he could not make a blow tell inside his antagonist's scientific guard. Meantime, Flood hit him smartly, now upon his knuckles, now upon his up-raised, capering knees, or shins, and at length, while hard-pressed, was compelled to knock the mad fellow down. Silence prevailed amongst the Rockites, which Gerald at first feared might bode danger, but which was really suspended breath, caused by their utter astonishment and admiration. Up jumped Hogan, after a few seconds, and frowning deathfully, flung by his short cudgel, and snatched from a by-stander a club

of great length and weight. "Asy, gorçoon!" said his father.

"He'll kill you, now, if he can!"—cried Flood's constant seconder, as the young ruffian attacked him.

"And I hinder him, as I may, without aiming at life?" questioned the brave dandy, as he with difficulty parried many a deperate blow.

"To be sure!—what else?"—answered several: "he desarves it."

"Then must I very positively disable his weapon-arm;" and scarce had Flood spoken the words, when young Hogan dropped his formidable club, and let fall to his side the member that had just flourished it so vigorously. The arm was broken.

CHAPTER X.

"BRAVE Rockites!" resumed Flood, now appealing earnestly and naturally to the by-standers, whose seriousness, at the serious termination of their amusement, probably urged him to forget his habitual eccentricity—"brave Rockites, I request you to take notice that this I have been compelled to do in self-defence, my antagonist having attacked me at odds not first agreed on; and pray observe also, that the arm I have hurt, inflicted upon me, at my first introduction among you, the only degrading blow which, as a gentleman, and a man, I have ever received."

The band remained silent. At last; "What does yourself say, Dinny?" asked Flood's staunch friend, while the father sat by his son, at one side.

"Why, I believe the gorçoon must go home to his mother to be nursed, for another start, and that's all," replied Denny.

"This purse will pay his surgeon," resumed Flood, presenting it to his seconder.

"It's heavy, 'faith," observed this person, as he handed it to the old man.

"Thankee, your honour," said the father, coolly enough; but as he put it up, the Rockites muttered their satisfaction.

"The rascal should not have had a farthing from me," remarked Gunning to his champion.

"Whisht, ould man, or maybe we'd forget whose brother you are," counselled Denny.

"Forget, and be d——!" Mr. Gunning began to retort, when he was interrupted by the reentrance into the den of men who had long before gone out to watch, a second time, on the neighbouring roads, for Mr. Bignel's expected new tenant. Every face grew still more serious, nay, stern, at their sudden appearance, and they were assailed with questions from every tongue. The tidings they had to communicate produced general disappointment.

"Their gossip," as they called the doomed man for whom they had been on the look-out,

had not yet come in their way; and, moreover, must not be expected to-night, for intelligence to that effect had reached Bignel, as "a friend in the house," assured them.

Gerald rejoiced in his heart at this providential disappointment, and hoped that no outrage of any kind could that night be committed. But the sanguine brigands otherwise determined.

From their growling deliberations he inferred that, having assembled in great force, and bent their minds on an exploit, they were unwilling to disband and go home, without executing vengeance upon at least the principal object of their hatred.

This point decided, important questions next arose concerning "Captain Mickle." No one could account for him; it seemed to all that, as Denny had at first said, he left them to pursue their own measures; and again it was resolved to act without him; old Hogan, as his serjeant, succeeding to a temporary command over his comrades.

The heavy and sunless winter's day was now failing; the expanse of bog without grew blacker.

"Well, boys; an' we'll just have time, afore we go, for a mouthful, and a taste of the *potteen*; but it must be a taste in rason; remember that, and no grumbling. And the gintlemen, too, that we're hindering from their good dinner, sure they must be hungry," said Denny.

"What hogs' food have ye?" asked Gunning.

"Only just the praties, Sir, and the potteen."

"Agh!" shrugging his shoulders, "*the praties;* raw, I suppose?"

"Yes, your honour; but we'll soon roast 'em."

"Roast 'em? here, amid such a combustible pile? Do you want to roast us along with 'em?"

"If the place takes fire, sure there 's plenty o' water to go into from it," answered Denny.

"Thank you," said Gunning.

During this dialogue, several of the peasants rooted holes in the damp turfen floor, filled them with potatoes and straw alternately, heaped dry sods of the convenient fuel over all, struck lights with their pistols, and dinner was soon cooked. The mingled interest and contempt, natural yearning, (for he was very hungry,) and recollective

abhorrence with which Mr. Gunning eyed these proceedings, was amusing to Flood and Gerald. He would turn with a shrug, to gaze out at the inhospitable waste of bog, but as often glance back at the roasting process. The primitive meal was ready, and the Rockites, kneeling or stooping round the different fires, began, in great glee, to snatch up the hot potatoes, and, delving off the blackened peels with their skilful thumb-nails, to eat them ravenously, blowing upon them, all the while, and passing them from hand to hand, to avoid being burnt. Now and then, according to the permission of their new chief, they moistened their throats with a sip from a cow's horn; and delighted with their dinner they seemed to be. Gerald now detected his old friend eagerly watching their motions, and more than once heard from him that peculiar sucking in of the breath, between the parted teeth, which may philosophically be termed a symptom of strong animal desire, though a plain-spoken person would say that Mr. Gunning's teeth watered. At last, losing patience,

"You break faith with us, old chap," he said, addressing Denny; and when his hint procured him a little pile of roasted potatoes, near

to his hand, and a spare cow's horn, half-filled, Mr. Gunning used his thumb-nails and his jaws to as good a purpose as any one around him; and when pretty well helped, recommended his young friends to follow his example; adding, that he never before knew what it was to get a good potatoe; that he saw London was not the place to get them; and as to the bog-whisky, he assured Gerald that it was at least better stuff than Mr. Gore's Madeira puddle.

"And what 's to be done with me, now?" he inquired, as the men stood up from their meal, once more assuming serious faces.

"Why, Sir, *you* must be sent off to your friend, Mr. Knightly," said Denny.

"Sent off? how am I to go?"

"In your *kish*, and hay about you," answered Gerald's humoursome advocate, using a kind of rustic, slang phrase, generally applied in a figurative sense, though now in a real one.

"In my what?" snarled Mr. Gunning.

"There it is," said Denny, pointing to an oblong wicker-basket, about five feet in length, shallow, and open at top, with which two men

entered, bearing it, like a barrow, upon poles which had just been thrust through it from end to end. In Ireland, such articles are made to fit into the peculiar 'cars' of the country, for the purpose of ensuring a compact load of any loose material; turf, stones, or coals.

Though Mr. Gunning was pleased in his heart at the prospect of speedy escape, he strongly objected to travel by this mode of conveyance. His weight might burst the wicker bottom, or the poles might break, and then he must surely tumble into the bog, and perish, the night grew so dark. Denny and others ensured him against any such perils. Then came the more important question—"How do I know that I shall be carried to Mr. Knightly's?"

"Oh, honour bright," answered all: "a friend of Mr. Knightly, and a brother of Mr. Gunning of Belleview, need fear no deceit at their hands."

"Well; I'll believe all that when I see it. And what becomes of my young friends?"

"They 'll just stay here, with a friend or two of our own, till we come back," answered old Dennis; "and then, by the time, towards

morning, when your honour will be left at Mr. Knightly's gate—"

"Towards morning!—why, confound you, if I leave this infernal hole now, what should keep me on the road till near morning? 'Tis but a few miles to Mr. Knightly's; and if those savages only take me on at the rate of a sedan-trot, I can be there in an hour."

"But your honour 'ill consave that we don't want you to tell on us, as you promised, till our night's work is done; nor the other gentlemen either, though they don't threaten us as you do; so, they 'll stop here, as I said afore, while we're on the fut; (there's no use in letting 'em come with us, to be looking at us, you see, Sir;)—and you'll be axed to stop, in some convenient place to Mr. Knightly's, if you plase; and as soon as you can do no harum by informing again us—"

With increased anger Mr. Gunning interrupted the speaker, protesting against being removed, on such an understanding. He would prefer staying with his friends. Denny replied that so he should, if it were as safe to carry him through the bog at a later hour of the night, of which the noon promised to be so

" pitch-dark;" still he objected; but, at Denny's command, his appointed porters lifted him into the kish by main force, tied a handkerchief on his bald head, and, amid his abuse and maledictions, trotted off with Mr. Gunning along the narrow causeway that ran from the entrance.

" And so we 're quit of the wickedest ould man that ever I seen with my two born eyes," observed Dennis; " it's a marcy he didn't bring down the roof on our heads. Come, boys, get ready."

Gerald thought this the time to exhort the Rockites against the atrocities they were about to commit, and accordingly he addressed them earnestly. Flood seconded him in the most serious speech he had that evening delivered. The men, pausing in their preparations of blackening their faces, and kicking off their brogues, looked angry and threatening. While the gentlemen continued, Denny sternly interrupted them.

" You 're spaking of what doesn't concarn you, and what you know nothing about; and we never let strange people meddle or make

with us; no, nor our neighbours either; remember the story about Father Dick. And so, hould your tongues, gorçoons; it 's the best of your play, maybe, if ye don't want to make us forget the smooth promises ye had ready awhile agone, and call to mind, instid of 'em, that ye are strangers, in earnest, without a friend to give ye a good word, like the gintleman that 's just gone, in the country wide. Come here, Shamus; come here, Paudge," he continued; two Rockites advanced, well armed; " Stand here by their sides, and let us find 'em here, alive or dead, when we see ye again. Start off, bould boys! The foremost o' ye carry red sods, that the rest may know their way along the tracks, and not go astray after the willy-the-wisps, that 's beginning to dance about in the bog."

Promptly obeying his commands, the men bounded out, barefooted, many holding sods of lighted turf in their hands.

" Make off *you*," resumed old Dennis, addressing his son, in the open air, " as fast as you can, to the mother and Nance."

"No; I'll stay here," answered the lad, scowling at Flood.

"The divvle a stay, then," said his father, shoving him far from the entrance to the retreat—"no matter how the gintlemen 'ill happen to be settled with hereafter, *you* sha'n't bring me into trouble by hurting 'em behind my back. Go home, I bid you!"

"Men," turning to the guards; "don't let the born fool inside the place:" and the old brigand briskly followed his party.

"Well, I know who Bignel 'ill have to thank, if ye are faint-hearted enough to let him off to-night," muttered the ill-blooded youth, once more scowling at Flood; and then he disappeared.

"Not your own self, at any rate, my boy," cried one of the two men left with our friends, speaking after him—"for your hand was never the one to cry stop, when once it had a finger on the trigger;—see," peering out into the increasing darkness,—"Salvation to my soul, Shamus! but the young rap is staling after the boys, since he won't be let in here—but he can do no more than look on; they won't give him back his pistol."

"So," said Flood to Gerald, as both retired and sat down in the remote end of their turfy prison; "I may have remotely done this oft-named Bignel some good, without intending it."

"But yourself none, I fear, Flood."

"Explain slightly, good Blount."

"We remain in the power of your enemy's father, upon his return; and I did not relish the old ruffian's last words, in allusion to that return, addressed either to our guards, or to his hopeful son."

"Nor I, very positively."

"These men have been told to produce us here, *alive or dead*," continued Gerald.

"Such were the orders, worthy fellow: nay, the allusion, touching the hereafter, vouchsafed to his son, appeared to me more disagreeable."

"It is my opinion, my dear Flood, that the old scoundrel only kept in his revenge because he saw his party indifferent to the cause for it; and that he hopes to provoke them against us, when their passions shall have been roused to tiger-cruelty by the scene they have gone to enact."

"And indubitably with that sage opinion I rather incline to agree."

"Self-preservation, then, as well as the claims

upon us to try and prevent this outrage, by alarming the neighbourhood, suggests—what?"

"Our seizing upon the persons of yonder fellows, securing them here, and effecting our retreat," answered Flood, coolly, but with a courageous sparkle in his eye.

"Then we must not longer discuss it," resumed Gerald; "for, supposing them mastered, we can find our way out of the black bog only while the lighted turfs borne by their comrades remain in view to guide us; and see,—there they go, like wavering stars across the rayless gulph."

"Forbid it, Heaven, that we mistake them for the facetious meteors of the bog, spoken of by Captain Dennis Hogan, my excellent Blount."

"No, they are too red; see, again—there, nearer to us, glides one of the false lights you mean, and note how much paler."

"Good. Let us remember the distinction. Now measure those two unsuspecting ones, as they look out after their friends from the entrance, and take your choice of them."

"Choose for me."

"You have been an invalid, most eminent;

and therefore, only, I claim the biggest creature, and him I rather propose not to struggle with, but merely fell, by aid of Mr. Thomas Cribb's best method. Are you ever tranquilly sure ' of a floorer ?'"

" I 've never struck a blow in my life," said Gerald.

" Enormously strange. The primitive ! But spare we comments. Your part, then, must be to embrace the lesser identity, rather of a sudden, and him get to the earth, as well and as speedily as is within the range of possibility, not suffering him to poke his long-barrelled piece at your inexpressibly precious head during the effort. This you incontrovertibly can perform ; for, lo ! he lacks inches, five or four, of your aristocratic height, and withal is elderly, thinnish, and hard-worked."

" I shall do my best," promised Gerald.

" Then are we free as yonder bog-ranging phosphoric sprite. Now, mark ; steal up your hand to your neck,—innocently, as I do, so,—and unloose and cautiously convey to your friend, the ample silken kerchief which encircles your noble thorax."

Gerald obeyed those orders. " Good. Out

of your poke also draw its proper square of silk—warily, still—an inch at a time; thanks. Arise, now, heaving an audible sigh of captivity, and walk a few melancholy paces up and down, while with corresponding articles of costume, undeniably mine own, I contrive gentle fetters for yonder Goliah; honours, to match, being already prepared for *your* prize."

Gerald arose, following his friend's instructions. The men turned at his step and his sigh, but immediately resumed their gaze after the receding turf-lights, and began to whisper earnestly. In a few moments Flood joined Gerald, nothing appearing in his hands. The friends linked each other, and now paced together up and down their singular prison-house. "They must face us, before we act," said Flood, "in order to enable you to secure the long barrel, by hugging it affectionately to your breast. Friends," he resumed, plaintively addressing the guards, and languidly stepping towards them, still linking Gerald, "we thirst to extremity, and would give gold for water."

"Here 's no water but what 's to be found in the bog, and you'll not be thinking it the

natest," answered the tall peasant; "but what 'll ye give for *that?*" extending his cow's horn, with his left arm, upon which rested the pistol he held in his right hand.

"This," said Flood, holding out a sovereign; and still the friends advanced; both men had now turned round—"*This!*" repeated Flood, tendering his "floorer" instead, while Gerald pounced upon *his* man. Mr. Thomas Cribb's "best method" partially failed: the huge Rockite only staggered like an ox, also bellowing like one; and was about to cock his pistol, when Flood, jumping in with all his strength, at a second attempt struck him down. The next instant he wrested the pistol from his hand; the next deliberately knocked him on the head with its butt, although the blow seemed a calculated one, and intended to stun only; and then, crying out to Gerald,

"'Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!'"

"That is, contrive to keep Poucet amazingly tight for one moment!" adroitly slipped his captive's head into a running noose, formed at the end of one silk handkerchief; pinioned his arms with two others, attached to it; tied a fourth round the fellow's ankles; jumped up; found Ge-

rald tumbling, not quite at advantage, with the lesser Rockite, near the entrance; a second time used the butt of the pistol; then ran to a corner, where lay his own stays; assisted by Gerald, buckled them round the little old peasant, arms and all,—the straps, as may be concluded, stretched to their last holes; tore a slip off his white surtout, from the lapel to the skirt; with this fettered the man's legs; thrust his bare feet into one of the many pairs of brogues kicked off by the main band; and, a moment after, Gerald and he were hurrying through the bog, armed with the weapons of their late guards.

"When the lights first changed their straight course, it was to the right; and this, therefore, must be our way," said Gerald, turning upon another causeway, at right-angles with that which had led them so far.

"Agreed," said Flood, keeping at his side; "and, veritably, yonder they still appear to give us assurance."

"At the verge of this dreary waste, I should think, if not beyond it, Flood."

"Very possibly;—but hold, doughty Blount, may they not be called stationary, now?"

"I fear so," answered Gerald.

"I venture to hint that the bellow emitted by my great animal may have aroused the suspicions of the flying band," resumed Flood, "and that they pause to hold counsel on us?"

"Supposing your case, what must we do?" asked his fellow adventurer.

"The gallant thing, yet—push on, worthiest."

"Till we come up with them?"

"I say not precisely so; but, surely, till we have all possible aid from their breeze-fanned sods, to extricate ourselves out of this very abominable and perilous maze."

The friends continued their course, often obliged to travel zig-zag, according to the whim of the trackways, and scarce able to distinguish the narrow and by no means firm slips of soil to which they were limited, from the sedges or from the water which edged them. Night, the real wintry night, had gained it deepest darkness; overhead not a star twinkled. No distinct forms of elevated land could be traced in the distance; no tree, no house, no cabin; all was vague gloom. The wind now and then swept gustily and sullenly over the drear expanse of bog; or the black water-fowl, startled from their rushy tufts by the quick feet of the

fugitives, plunged unseen, though near at hand, farther out into the stagnate lake, flapping it with their heavy wings, and booming wildly.

"This is worse than the run from Burgos," said Flood.

"Look at the lights, ahead!" cried Gerald.

"A bull,—an exceedingly native bull, excellent comrade," answered Flood; "one cannot see things out of sight."

"They certainly all disappeared that instant, Flood—explain why."

"Gallant fellow, your command rather presumes me infallible, which compliment I waive; and yet would attempt to pronounce, that the Rockites have extinguished our guiding-stars, either for the purpose of pursuing their expedition along the more solid and more inhabited country, which now they gain, without notice; or haply, have done so in order to form an ambuscade for your admirable self, and your humblest—"

"Stand!" interrupted Gerald, as a light suddenly appeared about twenty paces before them; and he presented his piece.

"'Tis but the fiend," said Flood; while,

as both pressed forward, it fell back, and went out.

"Ah!—I forget—let us hold on," said Gerald, his voice tremulous.

"So; a few of our honester sparks, again at the proper distance, though not precisely in the same direction," said his companion. "Come; suffer yourself to turn upon this track; they have surely traversed it before us."

"Let us be cautious of getting too near them," advised Gerald, following Flood.

"They permit our free progress, for now they are not stationary, my Blount—so, forward."

Some quick walking, or rather repeated bounds, brought them to the extremity of the trackway they had last chosen; but that extremity was surrounded by water. At the same time, the lights, of which Flood had just spoken, vanished from their sight.

"How, my Pythias? was it but the imp again, with many of his fellows?"

"Look here!" whispered Gerald: both turned; and a single flame advanced down the trackway, about a man's height from the

ground, and moving up and down, and here and there, as a light might do carried by a man who should come springing along—" Is it illusion or reality? bewilderment or—death for us?" continued Gerald.

" The first it may be; the second it shall not be, brave Blount. What! sink before it? cheer up! 'tis borne but by one coward foe, remember, or by one exceedingly fantastic devil, after all."

" You detect my nervousness," said Gerald; " but will you believe the cause? These strange though usual phenomena, now first seen by me; the sense of bewilderment; the uncertainty of true or false, around us,—*this*, rather than dread of a Rockite bullet, affects me. See! that must indeed be a meteor—how it flickers towards us, as if waved to and fro by some malicious sprite, dancing with delight at our quandary."

" And now he valtzes back again," said Flood, " and now he melts into atrocious boggy air."

" And I can almost fancy his spiteful laugh, in that strange sound," resumed Gerald—" what is it?"

"It *is* a laugh, poetically-Germanically-sensitive Blount, and no will-o'-the-wisp laugh, either, though yet a most distant one—allow yourself to listen."

"I *do* hear feet hastening this way; we are pursued, Flood."

"Veritably, good fellow."

"What then?"

"You can swim, I positively conclude, else would you now be traversing the real Stygian shades, instead of this Irish imitation of the same?"

"And shall we jump in here?"

"Even here; for odds surely come against us."

"And strike for what point?"

"Yonder, I venture to be very well assured, is firm land; see; that must at least be an eminence, blacker than the sky; and its base, sweeping towards us, is the lightish spread of something, that, at about sixty yards, edges the ebon pool we have to cross."

"Let us try;" and Gerald, abandoning his piece, as many footsteps came closer, set Flood a good example. For dear, dear life they swam boldly to their point, often entangled

amongst rushes and weeds; it was indeed solid land which Flood had descried; long before they reached it, they could wade; and they sprang lightly upon the spare grass, when almost the whole of the Rockite party rose from the ground, and without much trouble again made them prisoners.

"I tould ye I heard them in the bog, where the weakness made me lie down," said young Hogan.

"What's become of our poor gossips, that we left to keep you company? Did ye—*kill them?*" demanded his father, his last words uttered in an ominous tone.

Gerald and Flood declared the true state of the case.

"Do ye believe 'em, boys?" continued old Hogan. A vengeful mutter answered him.

"Make the Sassenachs kneel down," said a voice. Our friends once more remonstrated, eagerly, it may be concluded, proposing, as a very simple test of the truth of their statement, that a man should be dispatched to the retreat in the bog. Other voices concurred with this alternative. Denny resumed.

"We can't spare a man the present time;

the four or five that went to hunt the gintlemen for us, is loss enough when we can't wait any longer till they come back. But maybe they 'd go to the Dry Lodging, and bring us the news we want. Morebetoken, howsomever, this brace o' foolish boys is to be paid for their peeping; let them have a right peep now in arnest. Let them see somebody else kneel down, *first*—if it's a thing that *they* must be behoulden to kneel down themselves, I mane. So, look after them, bould boys, in the front; ye know we let them stay behind, once afore. And now, up the hill, like hurlers."

CHAPTER XI.

PURSUANT to old Dennis's order, Gerald and Flood were placed in the midst of those of the band who formed the advance, and all quickly moved up the eminence. Upon its brow a man appeared, starting out of a copse, like a guilty spectre.

"Is all quiet below?" inquired Dennis.

"As quiet as an empty church of a Sunday; I was in the yard, a minute agone," answered the sentinel.

"But he's not gone to bed?"

"No, but going to sing his bed-psalms."

"So much the better for him and us;—stale down, boys."

Opposite the hill upon which this dialogue took place was another, partially and newly planted, so far as the profoundly dark night allowed Gerald to judge, and near to its base twinkled

lights, as if from the windows of a house. The hollow between both eminences seemed traversed by a road. As the Rockites descended to this hollow, they trod over fields in a good state of cultivation, and Gerald heard one of them whisper, "How well poor Mickle's ould farum comes on with him." They arrived at a dry wall which fenced one side of the road previously guessed at by Gerald, and here all at first crouched down, and then, one by one, crept stealthily over, and again bent low when they stood upon the road, causing the prisoners to follow all their movements. Gerald now more certainly knew that they were before a house. The candle-light vividly streamed through the shutters of its windows, and its humble front, one story high, became, from its white or lightish colour, a decided object in the gloom. It was not very distant from the road, in the opposite wall of which appeared a small, barred gate, that led up to it.

"How mighty convanient it is, boys, that he 's in the Farrels' ould house, to-night, warming it for the new tenant," whispered Denny.

"But no one is in the last empty house he made, to-night—in mine," said the elderly man,

of whom mention has already been made during the scene in the Rockites' head-quarters, as the grave cabinet-minister of Dennis Hogan.

"That 's Martin spaking," said a weak female voice from the opposite side of the road. The man, crying "Jude!" under his breath, started across; the foremost of his comrades, taking our friends with them, followed. Close by Mr. Bignel's gate lay a woman, wretchedly habited, holding an infant to her bosom. Two other children, more grown, slept in her cloak, at her feet. She showed signs of feebleness and agitation.

"Jude, machree," resumed her husband, kneeling by her side, "what are you and the childer doing here? and how did you come here? I left ye far away yesterday."

"Yes, Martin," she answered; "but the way you left us in, was worse to bear than a long road; without house or home, bit or sup; and when you turned your back on us, and the *weenocks* began to cry for what I couldn't give 'em, I said to myself, sure Bignel is a Christhen, any how; and if Martin's wife and childer axes help at his dour, he 'll remember who put 'em in the way to ax it: and so, Mar-

tin, with the babby in my arums, and little Jude and little Johnny by the hand, I walked the weary miles now between us and our own place, and that's the reason you find me here, to-night."

"Is it all the reason? is it the reason I find you outside of his gate, instead of under his roof? You hadn't the strenth to go up to the house? eh, Jude?"

"I hardly had the strenth, Martin, but I did go up."

"Well?"

"And I knocked at the front-dour, but no one came, only a winda was lifted up, over my head, and shet down agin; then I turned round to the back-dour; and that was opened only to be slapt in my face: and they spoke of loosing the dog in the yard; and then I grew afeard for the childer; and I thought to walk far away from the house; but the load on my heart, and the weakness o' my feet, to say nothing of the crature in my arums, made me drop here, where you see us afore you."

"Better and better. And how is the babby?" stretching his arms for it.

"The hunger and the could troubled it,

a-cushla, till awhile agone, but now it 's asleep, like the others."

" Why it 's dead !" cried her husband, looking close into the face of the little corse.

The mother's scream was drowned in the horrible shout with which the Rockites, now headed by Martin, instead of Dennis, rushed to attack Bignel's house. Their cry interrupted another sound which issued from Bignel's parlour ; it was the swell of a hymn, sung by several voices. The furious barking of the unchained mastiff in the yard answered their threatening challenge, however ; but as Gerald and Flood were hustled by their guards into a small square enclosure before the hall-door, two shots killed the courageous animal on the spot, and, with the expressed purpose of giving Mr. Bignel a foretaste of his own fate, the bleeding carcass was instantly thrust between iron-bars, lately put up before his parlour windows,—the shutters having first been burst in with the butts of muskets and fowling-pieces,—and flung upon the floor of the apartment.

The lights had been extinguished all through the house. Without a moment's pause, the enraged and revengeful band ran in separate

groups, the prisoners' guard only excepted, to try for ingress at the front and at the back doors, and at the lower windows. None of the latter were found undefended, however, by iron-bars, which resisted their efforts; and the former proved well-bolted, and locked. Meantime, Mr. Bignel and his garrison fired steadily from windows in the second story, themselves remaining unseen, and were answered by volleys, which shattered the glass, and tore the slates off the slanting roof; while successive shouts, threats, and curses, accompanied the explosions, the crash, and the clatter.

How the defenders fared, Gerald could not surmise; but he observed, with mixed wonder and pleasure, that none of their shots took effect upon the assaulters; because, however the affair might end, he reflected that any personal injury sustained by the frantic peasants would greatly add to their thirst of blood. And doubtless his sympathy for Mr. Bignel had much to do with his present feelings and calculations; but concern for himself and for his brave companion chiefly called them up. Nor was he made less selfish on this point, when Dennis Hogan, coming from the rear to the

front of the house, to head a renewed attempt on the hall-door, said to the guards, while his features, tone, and manner at last reassumed the savage energy they had shown upon two former rencounters with Gerald,

" Take the best care of the gintlemen."

Three of the strongest of his party now hurled huge stones, which they could barely lift and propel, against the hall-door, and crashes and increased cheers soon told that poor Bignel's dangerous moment was near. Yelling like demons, the Rockites jumped into the house; a few shots followed under its roof; then Gerald saw the victors busily placing candles in every window; and, amid the light thus thrown upon the enclosure in front, Bignel was dragged out.

His head was bare; his coat off,—perhaps he had thrown it by to leave himself more free for defence,—but he now made no struggle against his ferocious enemies; his head hung on his breast, his eyes were cast down, and the hue of anticipated death swarthed his features. Indeed he seemed stupified, and insensible to the fate that awaited him.

" Kneel down, Bignel!" cried Martin, dash-

ing him on the ground; the victim fell prostrate: "Stop a hand, boys!" continued the maddened husband and father, and he ran towards the road. Gerald repressed, at this respite, the acting of a determination formed in Bignel's favour.

"It 's a shame for a pious body, like you, to lie flat there," said Dennis—"stay on your knees, as you 're bid;" and he seized Bignel's arm and placed him in a kneeling posture. The silence and repose that, for a moment, had previously ensued, most probably prepared the land-steward for becoming conscious of Hogan's sudden words and action, and now, wavering from side to side, as he knelt, he stared around him.

"Yes! It was I that stirred you," resumed Dennis, bending close to Bignel's face; "and don't you remember me, gossip? I am the ould fellow that 's forced to take to labouring-work, and to selling sour beer and whisky, in a house, in the village below, that I have at a double rack-rent from one you know, because the same body took my dacent farum from me, to let it out at another rack-rent."

"And must I give up the ground you let to me for two years, afore good witnesses,"

asked Larry O'Dea; "or send the childer to your school, Misther Bignel?"

"Will your honour take the security I offered for the last gale, and let the cattle out o' the pound, to-morrow morning?" inquired another.

"I 'd trouble you, Sir, if you plaise, for a good word in the next letter you write to Lord Clangore, over to England, instead of penning us all down to be raps and rogues," said a fourth.

"Bignel," demanded the youth, who had befriended Gerald and Flood in the bog, his good-humour now gone, his brow deadly, and his tones deep,—"was it by the psalm-singing, and the Bible-reading, and nothing else, you coaxed my mother to quit her fatherless childer, and her ould home, and her ould prayers, to go among the *swaddlers*,* and be a sarvant in your house?"

"Bignel! how cum *that*?" screamed Martin, reappearing with the dead infant in his hands, and flinging it on the ground before the

* Methodists, or other sects.

kneeling man: "Draw out afore him, boys, and give me the first offer!"

"With a hearty good-will," said old Hogan; "and to bring to his mind as good a rason as any, let him remember the Farrels."

"The Farrels!" shouted all, as they took their ground. Gerald was again about to interfere, but a second interruption checked him. The galloping of a horse was heard near at hand on the road, and then through the gate that led up to the house, and, mixed with the sound, a woman's voice repeated—"The Farrels! Never mind the Farrels! ye have no right to spill blood in their name! Hould your hand, Dinny Hogan, if it isn't too late to bid you!—hould your hand, and listen to me!" The speaker, Moya Farrel, here came upon the scene, jumped from her horse, and ran between Bignel and his executioners. The land-steward swooned.

"No," she continued; "if poor Mickle and I can't forget what he did to us, we forgive it; and, I say again, that's why ye have no right to harm a hair of his head on our account. And, morebetoken, Mickle has sent me here, to tell

ye so, and to bid you, on every other account, not to touch Bignel! And well ye know ye are book-sworn to do his bidding."

"Where is Mickle himself?" asked Dennis.

"Coming after me," replied Moya; "and you have a rason of your own, Dinny Hogan, to be wondering at that! Good care you took to keep him from hindering this work, ever since he left me, last night! But he got away from your boys, just in the nick o' time, Dinny, to stop your hand from it, and from more than *it*, maybe—Ah!" as, looking around, she espied Gerald,—"but there *he* is, too, safe and sound yet!"

"*He?*" repeated Dennis; "and do you know who the doul the Sassenach is?"

"I do,—and you know a little of him, as well as me, Dinny, though not as I do; you know him for the good-hearted gentleman that saved your captain's life on the strange road, and his wife's and their poor childer's life—ay, and that helped him, by good advice, and kind words, to play the part he'll surely play to-night, in spite o' you. Oh, boys, boys! can ye raise a finger again the man that was Mickle's

only friend, when he wanted one? ay, or again the man afore you, for his sake?"

"How, for his sake?" questioned Dennis; "what do you mane at all, Moya? What's *the more* you know of this strange gorçoon?"

"What I won't tell you, *yet*, Dinny Hogan.—Never fear, your darling honour!" she continued, addressing Gerald. "Though I found the letter, that learned me who you are, just a while agone, no one but Mickle, and better friends, heard it from me—and Mickle—"

"Boys!" interrupted Martin, "our own troubles, put on us by Bignel, gives us fair lave and licence to settle with him."

"They do," assented Denny; "and, more-betoken, Mickle isn't here, after all, to give us his commands his own self."

"But he's coming after me, I tell you!" cried Moya Farrel.

"We don't know that, Moya; and whether or no, boys, just let us finish our good night's work; and sure, if he's angry at it, he can never say—"

"Dinny Hogan!" in her turn interrupted Moya, "you want to do, before he comes,

what you dare not do to his face, and for that rason you pretend not to believe me when I say he is on the road—but he is! The lameness wouldn't let him mount a horse; and besides, he was beholden to turn off o' the road, a start, to spake with friends that 'll give him better advice than you would, on *the whole* of the business, and consarning *all* you have now in your power. And have a care of Mickle, Dinny! well he knows, from me, the honest way the stranger was sent on his road to Lower-Court, out of your house, this morning!"

"Arra, boys, this is all the divvle's nonsense; take her away!" said Denny.

"They won't!"—she cried, falling on the yet insensible Bignel—"they won't, unless they drag the arms from my body!" she clasped the victim close: "they won't, unless they 'd earn a curse for themselves and all belonging to them!" Two men tried to bear her aside: "Hell-hounds, do, and rue it!—ye don't know whose eyes are looking at ye, this night.—Stop—listen! isn't that the noise o' the car that brings him to ye, as fast as a whip can speed the horse?"

"No such thing, boys," resumed Denny; "it 's just making fools of us, she is;—so, by

your lave, Moya" — by main force, he nearly unclasped her arms from Bignel; but the unhappy man, at last restored to consciousness, now clung as closely to her, and the struggle grew desperate: "Come, there 's no use, either in this, or in your big words, about this body and that body, and the other great *buggaboo* you want to frighten us with, that no one but yourself knows any thing about—lave off, I tell you!"

Denny's last tug was nearly successful; and now, indeed, Gerald felt himself called on to try another chance. Suddenly breaking from his guards,—"Hold, for me!" he said, "and you *shall* have Moya Farrel's secret — I am the Honourable Gerald Blount."

"Now, boys!—" cried Moya.

And *if* you are, by the G——!" exclaimed Denny, who perhaps had before surmised the fact, "so much the better! it's the very lesson we ought to larn you, for your brother's sake! Step aside,—*first*—and see how we like the good steward he sends over to us."

"Spare the man's life, and, in Lord Clangore's name, I promise you that he shall be removed from amongst you!"

"Divvle a spare!" cried Martin, and Denny and many others repeated the words, and warned the new mediator to retire.

"Spare him! and I give the same pledge, that the injuries he has done you shall be retrieved; that in future—"

"Whisht! listen again!"—broke in Moya, and now the rapid motion of wheels sounded distinctly below the house. She ran to the limit of the enclosure, and assisted her husband to dismount from a car, on which he reclined, driven by another man.

"Fall back, Rocks, all of ye," was Michael Farrel's command, authoritatively delivered, as he limped forward, supporting himself on a stick; and the party at once obeyed him. "Kneel up, Bignel," he resumed, "and take *this* hand to help you. Such as you treat us badly enough, but this is not the way to make ourselves be better treated. And, after all, ye are not as much to blame as them that lets ye do it."

Here, to Gerald's great surprise, and somewhat to his consternation, his old acquaintance frowned threateningly at him.

"I'm thinking, boys," he continued, "con-

sidering the comfort Bignel took from me and Moya, our downfal and sufferings, by his means, are greater than any of yours; but, if I forgive him, every man here ought—and will,—except one—Dinny Hogan: and, look—I'm standing before my father's dour, that 's now a strange dour to me, and he and ye know why—and yet, on this very spot, I take his hand again, and I say—may God forgive you, Bignel, for Mickle Farrel does! Come, boys; I must have more than one or two clerks to that prayer."

In excitement, men pass rapidly from one extreme to another; and the magnanimity shown by Michael, produced, indeed, an emulative "Amen!"

"Stand by me, then, Bignel—hould my arm; for, to make all sure, *I*'ll stand by *you*, in the house, till daylight. Now, where 's Dinny Hogan?"

After looking round them, the men answered that he had gone away.

"So he ought. And let the rest o' ye follow his example, barring the boys I'll call to my side for another business."

He mentioned the names of four of the party,

who, while their fellows dispersed, walked to him.

"Mr. Bignel, you'll lend us your handsome, smooth-going, jaunting-car?—I knew you would. Jim, go for it."

One of the four went into the back-yard.

"I want it for these strange gentlemen, that must move a start farther to-night, to be made more secure than they could be made in your house, until the morning; for, though we're done with you, Bignel, we're not done with them—I mane, if it 's the rale truth, that one o' them is the man that the letter Moya found would lead us to think he is:" and once more Michael Farrel glanced angrily at Gerald.

"For the love o' God, Mickle——" began Moya, in great wonder and alarm.

"Hould you your tongue, Moya—you're a simple, foolish crature, and a body would be just as great a fool to tell you every thing aforehand—but, whisper a bit, now that my mind is made up."

Leaving Bignel for a moment, he drew his wife aside, and, after exchanging a few words with her, she became, to Gerald's increased surprise, silent, grave, and reserved.

"Though I give up our boys, Mr. Bignel," he resumed, regaining the land-steward's side, "and won't let them have to do with my grand prisoners, maybe there's other friends, better able to keep the poor country quiet, that, with my help—"

"Your prisoners, fellow!" cried Gerald, catching Flood's arm, who now stood near him, all his former notions of Farrel's duplicity confirmed.

"You 'll see, Sir," answered Michael—"cock your pistols, and keep close to them,"—addressing his three remaining brigands—"and here comes the jaunting-car: and now, gintlemen, listen. I'm sending ye, as I said, to a place where we can find ye safe in the morning; but we don't want ye to know the road to the spot, just because ye might be talking of it hereafter. For this rason, ye must sit in the car, without being able to look about you; and because, over again, the handkerchiefs mustn't slip off o' your eyes, by any manes, your arums will be tied behind your backs, if ye don't say, upon your honours, that ye won't touch 'em; howsomever, if ye *do* bind yourselves down in that manner, ye will be treated like gintlemen,

and let to travel with your arums as free as God gave 'em to you."

To these proposals, in general, our friends violently objected. When, Michael, however, grew stern, and insisted on no time being lost, and when their new guards advanced, as if to force them into the genteel Irish vehicle, and threatened to blindfold them, and more than that, whether they would or not, Gerald and Flood, accepting the only advantageous alternative held out, gave their solemn words of honour upon the understanding required; allowed thick handkerchiefs to be tied over their eyes; and were then assisted into the jaunting-car, and, after Michael seemed to have held some private communication with his men, driven off, they knew not whither.

"Fellow-playmate in this tragic farce, are you indeed yet with me?" asked Flood, after a few minutes had elapsed in silence.

"Yes; that at least, Flood."

"And ultimately very desponding?"

"I certainly fear much, for we are in the power of a hypocritical scoundrel."

"Well; to time and fortune I surrender

up myself. Meanwhile, let us permit ourselves to beguile our minds of vain regrets and cloudy anticipations, by adverting to a few topics upon which, since we met this adventurous day, I have been prone to discourse; although this may be said to be the first favourable moment for my purpose. Poor Gore's exit from the world of Ireland has been vastly sudden and afflicting."

"It has, indeed."

"Close, very close, profound Blount. Yet must I come rather abruptly upon you by saying, that a certain letter, received this morning, renders unnecessary all farther mysterious language between you and your worthiest friend. Maria writes that you suspect our little fact."

"And I now suspect where you were riding to, when the Rockites encountered you, to-day. To your wife, who is with the Knightlies."

"Undeniably true. But on this tender topic I yearn to add a sentence or two. In solemn earnest, I am what is called anxious to let you know why I did not admit my

sentiments towards my present lady, to her excellent father—much less my amazingly hasty wedding."

"Thank you. I listen with interest."

"Then call to mind, sagacious Blount, certain hints I vouchsafed to yourself when you poetically would assert a tenderness which you never felt for the very brilliant being in question."

"I do. Well?"

"In beseeching you to stand guarded against her eloquent parent, I gave an advice that experience had suggested for my own adoption. For, good Blount, (though these matters would come better from another mouth,) I must inform you, that your poor friend had previously been taught a lesson considerably more important than that inculcated by the voyage to India of your three hundred and fifty; and well he comprehended, that if the unhappy Mr. Gore became aware of—as you would term it—the state of his heart, the excelling Maria could scarce be his, without enormous acquirements of knowledge in the same way. Wherefore, his necessitous mystery, shared, I rather should add, by the

peerless creature herself, whose most honouring confidence in me, whose excelling sound sense, and whose unavoidable coolness to her family, in return for their cruelties, permitted the amiable artifice. The words with which I conclude I am especially anxious to recommend to your consideration. Neither of us were, however, fully informed of the actual extent and nature of Mr. Gore's embarassments; if we had been, allow me to venture to say, that neither could have taken any step farthermore to disturb him; nay, that worldly prudence must then have yielded to mere human susceptibilities, by the agency of which Maria's ill-starred father might, at even extraordinary risk, have been preserved to us, and to his admiring Dublin. As it is, credit me, your old class-mate shall remember whose son he has so recently, and so much even to his own wonderment, become."

"Thanks for all this, Flood," said Gerald, and he groped out his hand, and shook it. "And now you, of course, expect that I shall relapse into my old habit of asking you plain questions, on my own account, connected with the last interview between Mrs. Flood—"

"Mrs. Flood! Enormous."

"And myself."

"Yes; droopingly I have anticipated new infliction from you: proceed, nevertheless."

"But a few weeks ago,—and how much has happened in that short time! how long it seems to me!—you assured me, in Père la Chaise, that you did not know who our mysterious lady was."

"And exceedingly correct you may still esteem my statement to have been."

"You farther gave me to understand that she had aroused a certain interest in your heart."

"My sole, gentle disingenuousness, error-forgiving Blount; put forward, in order to mystify even your astute brain upon the real state of the important portion of my viscera which you have mentioned."

"But what was the necessity of inconveniencing yourself as you did—"

"I faintly remember the annihilating effort—spare me."

"By hunting the lady through the labyrinths?"

"You shall comprehend. The very amazing similitude existing between her and the still more shining beauty of my worship, which

then almost perplexed me, as much as it has since rendered you amusing,—that alone compelled the unusual endeavours made to converse very closely with her."

"Well; how soon after did you ascertain who she was?"

"The same evening, positively; having first ascertained that her excelling likeness—"

"I deny that assertion, Flood; and in its first shape, just uttered by you, I deny it."

"Temerity, ancient friend, so to do; and future performance of battle between us, can alone arrange the point. Now, however, to proceed in replies to your ruthless questions. Very briefly—after leaving your side upon that memorable day, I learned that Maria Gore's self was in Paris."

"Ay, indeed?"

"Indeed—and, furthermore, slightly to add to your interest—in Paris as the visiting friend and guest of her copy, who—mark me—had just arrived from the south of the sunny country, with —mark me, I say!—an invalid brother—her—the third time, I cry, mark me!—her *elder* brother!"

"Here he comes again," said Gerald; "Mr. Knightly's eldest son."

"Indubitably I break faith with some of the very most divine of their sex, and yet, under all your present circumstances, much-injured, and much-suffering fellow, here, on our way to some noisome den, instead of progressing to the fairy abode in which the smiling and playful rulers of your destiny await, I little doubt, only your appearance to unweave all the gossamer webs it has been their pleasure and pride to wrap around your gigantic intellect, — thus circumstanced, let me repeat, your eldest admirer has not the heart to avoid continuing the subject; especially, guileless Blount, when your situation is to be consoled, by my treason against beauty, in hearkening to what will make you unmeasuredly felicitous, and of which, I fear, it has been cruelty to leave you so long ignorant."

"Augusta's old cant," said Gerald; "now for the mighty tidings, however."

"They come. The invalid brother, whom your radiant vision had been nursing, was—"

"Mr. Knightly's eldest son?" interrupted Gerald, now using the hitherto disagreeable words with a new interest—"and, let me see;—*her* elder brother—then she *is*, after all,—she *is* one of them?"

"The second, in years, of her fair sisters, assuredly—Rhoda Knightly; her superior of some few months, you, yesterday, (as I can learn,) bowed to, very awkwardly."

"Rhoda Knightly!" repeated Gerald, his mind now dazzled before the graceful beauty of Pere la Chaisê, now astride on a donkey, up the hilly, Devonshire road, in her company.

"Pass we a moment to her brother. This youth's father, as well as his sister, accompanied him, a few weeks before, to the sweet South, whither he had been removed from London, his life despaired of."

"Well? I 'm sorry for all their sufferings on the occasion—but what 's this to me?"

"And this youth and his father, learning from me, that you were in Paris, wrote you a joint letter, which, as now appears, you never received."

"And which, if I had received it, must have shown me cause, according to you, and your new married lady, and Augusta, and Miss Flint, and Mr. Gore, why I ought to be very anxious to embrace the writers?"

"True, to a proverb: permit yourself still to listen. And the first signature to that letter

was 'Ambrose Knightly;' but, although Mr. Knightly's eldest son has been named in baptism after his worthy father, such was not the second signature."

"Oh, yes, I remember; while Miss Flint was abusing me the other day in Dublin about him, she mentioned that some rich relation had left him a great property, provided he would change his name; but the matter made no impression on me, inasmuch as it was nothing to me; and again, I ask, what can it be to me now?"

"And that letter proposed to you mutual forgiveness of the past, and expressed a kind hope for future amiabilities on both sides."

"Of what past?"

"And hoping that you had received it in Paris, though the run home, immediately following, did not permit you to answer it, the writers of that letter called upon you lately in Dublin, to comfort you after your shipwreck; they having learned that enormous misfortune and adventure from Rhoda Knightly, your preserver on the beach, although your sister Augusta was not immediately warned to the same

effect, lest the tidings might prove perilous to her, but merely led to believe that you had voluntarily appeared near to Lower-Court, as if in a spirit of stealth or espionage; and hence her letter to command you back, containing her advice of the progress to Dublin of the two persons, whose appearance, she well knew, would heap immeasurable joy upon your head."

"Well; I suppose I must let you go on with this in your own way, Flood. Before we break through the grand enigma, however,—which ought to be written about, and called—'Mr. Knightly and his Eldest Son, a Mystery,'—answer me, if you can, a few less important questions. From your wife's admissions, in Dublin, I know that, although Miss Rhoda encountered me on the beach, she did not absolutely dictate my destinies in the Rockite hovel."

"Then has my fallible, though superlative, partner, happened to misinform you."

"No; Rhoda did not write me the precious note."

"Nevertheless did she prompt it, word for word, to her stalwart waiting-woman, her own pupil in penmanship; because, in the true de-

licacy of matchless woman, the lady would not address, with her own hand, a man who had never been presented to her."

"Go on. Since I was so near, upon that evening, both to Lower-Court, and to her father's house, why did she not cause me to be conveyed under the roof of either, instead of into a place where my life was in many ways endangered?"

"Had you gone to Lower-Court, excellent fellow, then must your sensitive sister have indeed learned your dilemma, and suffered accordingly. Unto Mr. Knightly's you must have gone, but that here, female dignity and nicety again interfered; your protectress was, upon that night, almost alone, and quite unmatronized, and uncountenanced, in her father's house. Her mother, and her very abundant phalanx of gallant brothers, and of beauteous sisters, adolescent and infantine, had gone to meet her father, her elder brother, and herself, at Cork, after their debarkation in their native and verdant country, and the whole amazingly fine family sojourned a day in that famous city, she proceeding, singly, homeward, on necessary business. Not many hours after her arrival on her paternal ground, the waves washed you to her feet; and however

humanely she felt towards your sad condition, and however she could contrive to soothe it, Miss Rhoda Knightly declined the honour of receiving you in her unmatronized mansion,—haply her innocent calculations of how the measure might rate, even in your punctilious estimation, slightly influenced her conduct; wherefore, wave-worn man, the Rockite hovel was your fate; though here, as the note informed you, it seems not intended you should have remained longer than three o'clock the ensuing day, at which hour her father, her brother, and so forth, were surely expected home, and a visit by one or more of the family to your uncomfortable couch, doomed on the part of your guardian angel; and home to the very minute they did come; and then, hearing of your fugacious escape to the metropolis, thither were you pursued by Mr. Knightly and his eldest son."

"And my refusal to see this famous pair, sent them back again, very indignant, of course," said Gerald.

"More in sorrow than in anger, veritably; inasmuch as your so doing, under circumstances believed to be known to you, must have lessened you in their estimation."

"This grows exceedingly provoking, Flood."

"However, since the evening at Mr. Gore's, when, by your answer to a question of your sister's town-prime-minister, proposed through me, you admitted the important fact of not having got *the letter*, every body is only monstrously amused at your expense, and working all human means to get you down to Lower-Court, where the scales are to fall from your eyes, under circumstances of very romantic and well-studied effect."

"But you have engaged to anticipate all that folly, like a good-natured and sensible person as you are; and, therefore, for mercy's sake, make me half delirious with happiness, and with love for the Knightlies, at once, Flood."

"Still gradually, not at once; ever I object to vehemence, and prepare against it. Return we to the invalid elder brother of your Rhoda, at the moment of her arrival with him and her in France.

"His life, as I have mentioned, I rather think, was then despaired of. Previously, in London, and before his friends reached him from Ireland, skilful leeches had utterly pronounced him a man whose hours were number-

ed ; yea, on the very spot upon which occurred the little affair that injured him so ominously ; —for, good Blount—and once more I ejaculate —mark !—he had been very well hit, and exceedingly badly wounded, in that species of mortal combat, called a duel."

" Flood !" cried Gerald, starting, " what can you mean ?"

" Nay, credible reports of his death followed his poor antagonist to France, whither, faithfully accompanied by his humblest though oldest admirer—"

" Oh, gracious God, Flood ! gracious God !" —again Gerald groped out his companion's hands, and clasped and wrung them.

" My dear fellow," answered Flood, to this appeal, " 'tis, thank Heaven, true—the only cloud that could darken your life is removed—the second signature to *the* letter was Robert Knightly Stanhope."

" Oh, thank Heaven, indeed ! oh, indeed, indeed, thank Heaven !"—and now, pressing his hands over his blindfolded eyes, Gerald wept with joy.

His feelings were disagreeably checked by the stopping of the car at this moment, and by

an abrupt announcement from one of the armed men, who had kept trotting at its side, that "Their honours were come to their journey's end." Gerald brought to mind they had recently entered through a gate.

"And ye'll just plase to step down at once, gintlemen—and you, Sir," to Gerald—"is it forgetting honour bright you are, with your hands on the handkerchief?"

Gerald assured him he was mistaken.

"Then, here, Sir,—where's your arum?"

"Stop a bit, Jer," said another voice; "let us ax the governor if all's ready, first—see, he beckons us from the dour."

"The governor?" repeated Flood to Gerald; "very positively, the amusing Rockites are sending us to jail; I've heard of such tricks of theirs."

"'Tis but one of their conventional words," said Gerald.

"Yes, every thing nate," resumed Jer, after his comrade had returned to the car, and whispered with him; "Come, genteels; and much good may your new lodging do ye."

They were assisted down from the car, and led a few steps, along hard, sandy ground. Then they

became conscious of entering a low doorway; and, two persons holding a hand of each, they pursued their course through narrow, winding passages, flagged under foot, and growing damper at every step. They passed through another door, which was closed and locked after them; a rugged voice said, "Uncover your eyes, gintlemen;" they did so, and found themselves in a low, square vault, from the arch of which overhead hung dripping petrifactions, but which was cheered, however, by a blazing wood-fire. The person who had spoken held Gerald's hand. He was an old man, respectably dressed, wearing powder, but the expression of his face seemed austere.

"In receiving you into this establishment, your lives are not immediately hazarded," he resumed; "for which rason, there," pointing to rude chairs before the fire, "you have the means of putting on dry things instead of your dripping clothes; you must hurry, howsomever, for in ten minutes I 'll come back to lade you to my superiors, with the handkerchiefs on your eyes, once again," and he unlocked the rough door, went out, and relocked it upon the outside.

Glancing in extreme surprise, and some apprehension upon each other, our friends advanced to the chairs, glad, at all events, of an opportunity to replace, comfortably, their wet, soiled, torn, and—so far as Flood's brogues went—stolen apparel. Every article of dress necessary for comfort appeared at their hands, including boots and shoes of various sizes, as if it had been sought to make sure of fitting them. Gerald's wonder increased, when he found one of the whole suits to consist of the principal contents of the portmanteau he had that morning deposited at Moya Farrel's; the other was quite new.

They zealously engaged in their toilet, and had become respectable-looking men, when their old—or rather new—warder, re-entered, and immediately proposed to bind handkerchiefs again over their eyes. To object, would have been useless; and once more, effectually blindfolded, they were led out of the vault, along another stone-passage, up a flight of stone-steps, again over a stone-floor, which echoed to their tread, giving an idea of a spacious apartment surrounding them; then up a second flight of steps, which were of wood, and, from their not

creaking or yielding, perhaps of old oak; and a second time their conductors paused, upon a landing-place.

"You are standing at the dour, gintlemen," resumed the old man, as he knocked, "and so, we'll be ready to restore you to your eye-sight, for good:" as he spoke, he unknotted Gerald's handkerchief, and held it ready to be pulled off. Flood felt a second person attending to him, in a similar way.

"Advance, prisoners," said a voice inside, evidently a woman's, while earnest whispers also sounded from the apartment; the old man tittered as he whisked away Gerald's bandage; a female titter responded to his from the stairs behind our friends; the door was pushed open, and they entered a spacious and splendidly furnished drawing-room, lighted to an excess that dazzled them, in the middle of which, seated in an arm-chair, raised on a little platform, and assuming (for a moment) a very queen-like air, appeared Lady Augusta Blount, supported upon the right hand by her rural-prime-minister, Miss Rhoda Knightly, and upon her left, by—as Flood has drawn the distinction — her civic-prime-minister, late Miss

Maria Gore; both ladies standing; both dressed alike; both in the same studied, though graceful positions; both showing the same expression of countenance; and, in fact, both evidently doing their best to look very like each other:—and very like they certainly were; but, spite of all their efforts, showing differences of feature, now that they stood together, which, at a second glance, left no doubt on Gerald's mind. For a moment only, as has been said, Lady Augusta played her regal state. The next, descending from her throne, and while Captain Flood more nearly approached his masquerading bride, she hastened to give Gerald a sister's salute, and bid him welcome to Lower-Court. Then followed his presentation to Miss Rhoda Knightly; and the bow of the gentleman, and the obeisance of the lady, would—their characters, their breeding, and their relative situations considered—have supplied to Leslie a subject for the exercise of that pencil which excels all others in the delineation of the elegant-ludicrous.

"And has it not been well done?" laughed Lady Augusta—"cleverly, charmingly got up, from beginning to end?—Oh, you can't think how we have plotted and contrived, ever since

poor Farrel, assuring us of your freedom from personal danger"—(a presumption and a hope, by the way, of Michael, rather than a certainty,) "came here to inform us of your presence amongst the Rockites in the neighbourhood, and then went off, a plotter, too, to send you to us. And how did he play his part?—And old Shortall, the butler?—very well? that's delightful! And you never once suspected? But indeed we all pitied your trials in the subterranean parts of the house—the old vaults are so damp—indeed, we did—though, for the sake of a good effect, we were compelled to repress our amiable feelings. And, Captain Flood, a word with you; you must not assume your horrid privileges too soon by scolding your lady and your wife, for seeming to forget for a moment some recent afflictions—poor, dear Maria! it was our persuasions, and pleadings, that forced her into it, much against her will—dear, dear girl!" Lady Augusta took Mrs. Flood's hand.

A knocking sounded at the hall-door. Rhoda Knightly and Lady Augusta both glanced at Gerald, one growing red, the other pale. He understood them. Some one entered below. His sister arose, offered her arm, led him down

to the door of a parlour—he entered the room alone, and embraced, "Mr. Knightly's eldest son."

"But I regret," said Captain Knightly Stanhope, after some conversation delightful to both, "that my father, who follows me home, is doomed to cloud our *second meeting*, and, indeed, *this house*, with sorrowful tidings."

"This house?" repeated Gerald: "oh, pray, pray, anticipate your father?"

"Lord Clangore's agent called upon us, just as we prepared to obey Lady Augusta's summons," evaded Stanhope, "with the letter which contains the sad intelligence—he had been from home, and it awaited him on his table since morning."

"But its contents?"

"Here comes my father to hand you the letter."

After another peal at the hall-door, Gerald saw enter the parlour his stage-coach companion of the previous night.

"I perceive that Robert has broken the news to you,—my Lord Clangore," said Mr. Knightly, when they had bowed to each other: "Yes, a second relapse has proved fatal;—and Rhoda's London correspondent supplied her with more

authentic bulletins, Robert, than the report of the physicians."

Here we for the present rest; ending, without absolutely concluding. That Gerald, in about a year afterwards, married a mere Irishwoman, and since then continues to live in Ireland, as a mere Irishman, is not sought to be disguised. That a great change previously took place in his opinions; that, following Mr. Knightly's recommendation, he bundled up a good many of his Anglo-Irish theories, and, to use that gentleman's words, already reported, "flung them overboard," is also avowed. But how he came to permit such a change in his early and deeply rooted prejudices; by what experience, by what observation, incidents, new acquaintanceships, discourses, and adventures, proposes a continued subject so various, interesting, and withal important, that, should his reading friends vouchsafe their consent, it shall be embodied in some future volumes.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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